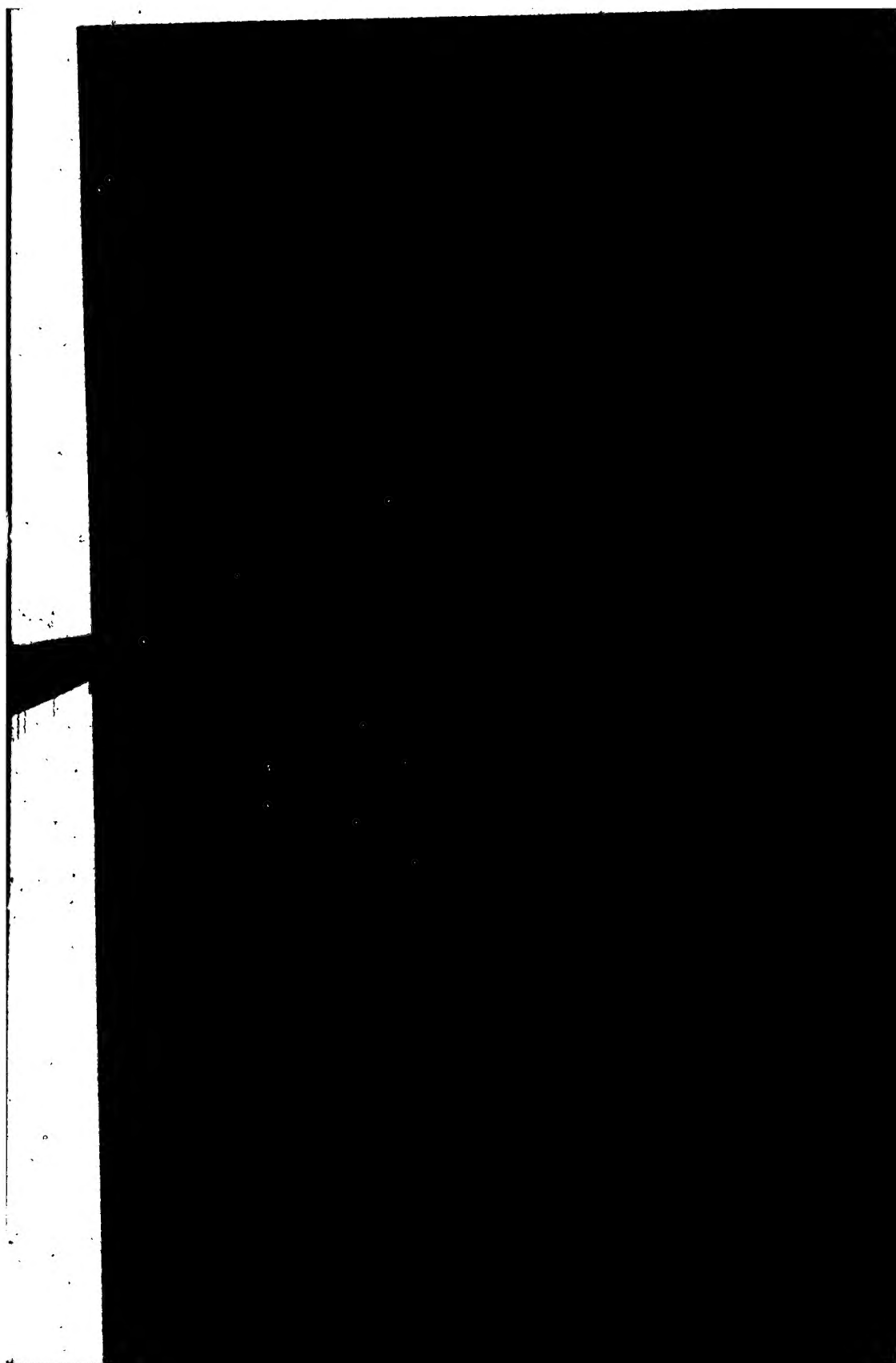


The Early History Of

**BENTLEY
And DISTRICT**



By Bert DeGroff



In the writing and printing of this early history of Bentley and District, a number of errors occurred. In order to make this history as authentic as possible the errors have been listed here.

Page 7 — Near the bottom of first column, Mrs. Ed Hawkings should read Mrs. Ed Hankins.

Page 9 — The last paragraph of the second column should read "Across the road, a little south is Stan Walker's farm on the"

Page 17 — In the second column the name Hollrope appears, this should read "Holbrooke".

Page 24 — The fifth line of the second column should read "Tom did not make it and went drift- . . ."

Page 33 — In the first column the name Nobley should read "Mobley".

Page 47 — In the first column the name Bert Challand should read "Mert Challand".

Page 49 — In the second column the name John Boode should be "Andy Boode".

Page 57 — In the first column the paragraph on John Solberg should read "John Solberg came in 1903 — married Sophia Vig. They raised 18 children and 16 are alive now."

Page 59 — in the first column Ted George's Shop should read "Ted George's shack"

please accept as a thank you
for your kind advice

G. S. D.

The Early History of Bentley and District

By Bert DeGroff

Fifty years ago the saying was "Go West Young Man,
Go West, and grow up with the country".

Oh where is the girl
That will go west with me?
We will take up a homestead
And happy we will be.
We will build a log cabin
With the ground for a floor,
A sheep skin for a window,
And a plank for a door.

I would that she should virtuous be,
Her face without a frown,
Her height five feet and half an inch,
Complete in face and form;
Her hair be black, her teeth be white,
Her age nineteen must be,
And if you know of such a girl
Just speak a word for me.

—Author unknown.

INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

Advance Electric	page 32
Bentley Drug Store	page 16
Bentley Mercantile	page 9
Bentley Motors, Lawrence Greif ...	page 14
Bert Amers Radiator Service	page 55
Blindman Valley Co-Op, Assn.	page 20
Calkin's School Bus	page 21
Central Alberta Dairy Pool	page 24
Central Alberta Florists	page 26
Corbett Bros.	page 35
Darling Ladies' Wear	page 28
Dowd's Radio Service	page 40
Farrell, C. M.	page 17
Freeman's Tiller Sharpening Service	page 30
Foord, Dr. W. H.	page 50
Garries	page 7
Gerry's Cabins	page 56
George, E.	page 25
Graham & Stewart	page 29
Hayhoe, F. M. & Son	page 27
Home Appliances	page 46
Macdonald M.-H. Farm Equip.	page 44
Martin, J. A. & Son	page 53
Mayberry 2-11 Service & Trailer Park	page 34
McLevin, H. and Son	page 41
Millard & Son Glass Shop	page 47
Mitten & Mullen Timber Co.	page 48
Morrison and Johnston	page 8
Munroe & Baines	page 33
Myers, D. J.	page 54
Nelson's Water Well Drilling	page 22
Peterson, Wm. H.	page 15
Pionéer-Meat Market	page 51
Purity 99 Service	page 23
Red and White Store	page 11
Red Deer Co-Op	page 31
Red Deer Hatchery	page 38
Red Deer Iron Works	page 42
Red Deer Super Service Station	page 39
Robinson and Holmes	page 36
Royal Lumber Yards	page 52
Sim's Auction Mart	page 43
Stewart Bros.	page 49
Sutton and Blore	page 37
Talsma, John	page 18
Thompson Auto Supply	page 45
Valley Electric	page 13
Valley General Store	page 12
Weaver, Dr. S. A.	page 19
White Rose Service	page 10

The Early History of Bentley And District

While we do not feel capable of undertaking the task of compiling Bentley's History, no one else has undertaken it, and we will do the best we can. As we have never kept any data on these events, no doubt we will miss many interesting facts that we would like to have mentioned.

We have found it quite hard to get the dates of the first old-timers.

Fred Nelles lived where Harry Hanson now lives. They came in the summer of 1897, and had the first white child born west of Gull Lake. Fred has the distinction of being a descendent of the first white man in Canada. Fred enlisted in the first World War, and his son Alex served overseas for four years in the infantry, later in the artillery. J. F. Nelles another son, enlisted in 1916, and lost one arm.

J. W. Walker, a brother in law of Fred Nelles, came in April of 1897. His place will be remembered by the old-timers as Walker's Point. They were gone when I came.

I am indebted to Fred Nelles for a lot of early day happenings and people's names.

The Bob Jones family probably settled about 1895, north of the Outlet, where Andrew Gillemaud now lives.

Joe Boode, father of John, Ole, Andrew, Louie, Carl, Axel, Christina, Magnus, and Albert, came in 1895.

The Cooks arrived in 1895, or sooner, as they were already here when the Boode family came.

A word about the Blindman River and the famous Blindman Valley. Legend has it that a

small band of Indian trappers arrived on the banks one early spring day. The sun was shining on the snow, the Indians were struck with snow blindness, hence the name Blindman river. Some say a blind Indian drowned, hence the name.

As Homesteads were getting scarce in the district near Lacombe, and reports were being spread of the wonderful fertile valley west of Gull Lake, land seekers came flocking in. Who were the first settlers we are unable to say, but among them were John Ebeling, Wm. Weise, S. H. Welch, Pete Lowe, Dave Ebersol, John Larson, J. Eggan, Martin Hedemark, Bob Hutchinson Norman Ros s, Mr. Cuspidson and Nels Larson across the outlet, and Alex MacKiligan came about 1898 from Utah. Then the big rush started and I will not attempt to put them in rotation. I came on July 10, 1901. I don't think that there was a vacant homestead in Township 40 or 41-R-1- W5th M, and not very many CPR quarters either.

Major McPherson, commonly called Billy, from Spencer, Wisconsin, and his sons, Charley and family, Willie and family, Jamie and family, Jabez and Allan, and two daughters, Mamie, Mrs. Ralph Holmes, and Sada, Mrs. Guy Holmes, and their families came. Perhaps some will be surprised to know that Jamie ran a two-story cheese factory where George Pico now lives.

Our neighbour, Clem Miles, homesteaded west of Bentley, where Dan Wecker now lives. Mr. Miles threshed for my father in Wisconsin with the horse powered

hard feed and straw carrier, and later with a steam engine, the first in our district. He also drilled a well on our old home near Spencer. Everyone knows his son Ray. Mrs. George Stephenson was a daughter, and Frances married Art Talbot. She lives in High Prairie. Art has been dead several years, and Mrs. Mabelle Stephenson has been gone several years also.

Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Chase lived south-east of Bentley. They came from Missouri, and did not stay in Alberta very long.

Mr. and Mrs. John Velfkind came from Wisconsin. John's father ran a store and mill, and had a town named after him. The Veefkinds were a very highly respected family.

Mr. and Mrs. Lidge Osgoode came from Wisconsin and farmed east and south of Bentley for several years. Both are gone now. Mrs. Veeffkind and Mrs. Osgoode were sisters. Mrs. J. B. McPherson, Mrs. Dick Sambrooke, and the late Mrs. Fred Marriot, were daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Lidge Osgood.

George Graham and his brother Charley came from near the same district. Charley farmed near Bentley for several years, then farmed near Forshee, and retired to live in Rimbey. Mrs. Charley Graham was a sister of Bill and George Cummings. Charley passed away several years ago, and Mrs. Graham passed away not long ago. Their son George lives on the old farm.

George Graham Sr. had one of the modern farms of the Bentley district. He raised a fine herd of Poll Angus Cattle, and specialized in high quality Oxford Sheep. His Oxfords and other sheep from his flock took about all the Ribbons at the Lacombe Sheep Sales.

I took several ribbons with my

Hampshire rams, and one prize with an Oxford ram. George raised registered swine. They were very highly spoken of. He farmed in quite a large way, and had his own power plant long before the Calgary Power Co. came into this district.

Lord and Lady Gordon bought the George Graham farm. They raise a high quality of registered swine, Holstein cows, and a fine herd of beef cattle.

How did Bentley get its name? O. E. Putnum told me that a petition or two had been circulated for a Post Office. Mr. Putnum sent in one appointing himself as Postmaster. (Irvin Suggett lives on the Putnam place.) Mr. Putnam had been in Lacombe, trying to make arrangements for running a store. While on his way home, he met George Bentley, and as the big question at that time was a name for the Post Office Mr. Bentley, being a progressive old-timer from Michigan, suggested Bentley as the name. Then things began to happen. Old Major McPherson sent some teams to Lacombe and A. Urquhart supplied the goods to start a store without a name. Of course, the Post Office came to the store, but was named Bentley; it caused some excitement for awhile, but it seems that it was a good name, and all the old-timers are proud of Bentley.

Just south of the Bentley store where the Elevators and Depot now are, was the Dan Murry farm. His sons, Rubin, Clarence, and Roy, and his brother Jim lived close by. I suppose that they came about 1899; they have all moved away now.

Orlow Urich lived south of Dan Murry's place, afterwards known as the Hutton place. Orlow did some blacksmithing along with his farming, very necessary for the early settlers. Later, Mr. Urich

ran a store in Bentley. He moved away many years ago.

Mr. and Mrs. Philo Slaughter, (Aunt Maggie, we called Mrs. Slaughter) probably arrived in 1900. Their son Ray and daughter Birdie, wonderful neighbours, all lie in the Bentley Cemetery. Philo was one of the first school board members of the Outlet School. He also was councillor for several years. Ray's only child, June, now Mrs. Lorne Weiss, lives near her mother, Mrs. John Ingram. Birdie married Mr. Storie, Depot agent in Edmonton, never lived around Bentley much. They left three girls.

Cecil Suggett lives on Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Adams' place. We called Mrs. Adams 'Aunt Nettie'. Their eldest son married Cora Marshall of the Rimbey district. Burrell was killed by a train in Edmonton while attending High School, and Linn moved to Seattle Washington with his parents, and was killed in World War 1. He was in the U.S. army.

George Deaver lived where Jack Rogers now lives, but he did not stay in these parts very long. G. Deaver, George Bentley and Philo Slaughter were the first Outlet School Board. McPherson's Mill cut the lumber for the Outlet School, and I helped get out the special order of logs to be sawed into lumber for the school.

Ed. Peiper built a frame house—there were very few those days. He lived across the road and a little south of the Forshee store. Ed did not stay long in these parts.

The first Forshee Post Office was run by Mrs. Fred Hoppins, probably a half mile north of the Triplett farm. Mrs. Triplett ran the Post Office for many years after the Fred Hoppins family moved away. Mr. Triplett was from Nebraska and was quite a

trader. He also located homesteaders and CPR land seekers. He was considered a very good man with a grain separator. The Forshee Post Office was quite a gathering place for the neighbours and the young people in those days.

Joiners ran a saw mill on what is known as the Simpson place. They cut lumber for the farmers as a homesteader could get a permit for 25¢ for poles, posts, building logs and sawlogs on the government land in those days; and there were several nice groves of spruce and tamarac close by.

The story is told that some of the men boarded themselves in small shacks. As Mrs. Joiner suspected that they were taking some of her meat, she decided to set a trap for them. She cut a ham through the joint, hung a part of it up with the rest of the meat, and kept the other part well hidden. In a few days, the one piece was missing. While searching through the shacks, she found the missing piece of ham, so, while the guilty parties were eating, Mrs. Joiner came marching in, with her part of the ham bone; as they fited perfectly, there was no argument. The pilferers quietly paid for their piece of ham, and no questions were asked.

The John Craig family lived just north of the Chapel School. They came in the early days, lived in Lacombe a few years, and ran a dairy farm for a time. Then they moved back on the farm, and built a nice house and a big barn. Ruth taught school for a long time. The Craig girls were considered very good teachers. Muriel married Mr. O. Massing, principal of the Rimbey School for some time. Lorne Craig has an up to date farm about a mile southwest of Forshee. Mrs. Nellie Craig taught school several years

before and after her marriage to Lorne. She is a good community worker. Arthur Craig lives in the Rimbey district. There is also a Ralph Craig who lives somewhere in the eastern united States. Mr. and Mrs. Craig were real old-timers, but both have passed away. Mrs. Beryl Gunnel was a Craig girl. Bill Gunnel was an Englishman, who arrived about 1905. He was councillor in his district for many years and took an active part in the activities of the neighbourhood. Bill had lots of friends. He is buried in the Bentley Cemetery. Mr. and Mrs. Gunnel have one son, Ronald.

Another old-timer in the district was Wm Sherman. He owned three quarters of land near the Chapel school. He was quite a talker and trader, and at one time he drove an odd team, consisting of one horse, one cow, and one bull. But, we saw many odd teams those days. However, the land had to be broken, and money was scarce. Mr. Sherman has been gone several years. He was quite a character.

The John Ellsworth family were old-timers in the district. They were from Nebraska. They arrived about 1901. They lived for many years in the Chapel school district. The two sons, Fred and Ed homesteaded close together on the same section (I believe). Mr. and Mrs. John Ellsworth are both gone. Fred was killed in a train accident near the Philo Slaughter place about nine years ago. Ed. still lives on his old homestead. He married Bessie Poling. They have one son, Harry, who lives on the John Craig place. Harry is an up-to-date modern farmer and has taken an active part in the promotion of the Power Line.

Fred Ellsworth married our old neighbour, Minnie Whitworth,

daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charley Whitworth. We will be writing about them later on. Fred and Minnie raised quite a large family. Several live in the Bentley district. Mrs. Webb Garner lives in Bentley; Mrs. Johnnie Saint lives in Edmonton. Estella Pearl married Charlie Calkins and one of the girls married Carl Thomas. I think that is all of the family.

South and east of Fred Ellsworth's farm lived another old-timer, Arthur Salley. He farmed some and worked on the road for Wm. Funt on provincial road work. The Salleys did not live in this district very long. I believe that they went to southern Alberta with Jim Morrison and took up a half section.

Phil Matthews farms the Salley farm and lives just across the road. Phil's folks came in April 22, 1906. Mr. Richard Matthews and Mrs. Grace Matthews. Phil was born in Cornwall, England, in 1901. Mrs. Phil Matthews was born Miss Marjorite Barker in May 1905. They were married on August 30, 1928, and have two girls attending the University in Edmonton.

Mr. and Mrs. George Draper lived where George Graham Jr. now lives. The Drapers later moved south of the Salley place. George did quite a lot of breaking in the early days with four horses. After Mrs. Draper died George did not stay on the farm long.

Across the road to the southwest lived another old-timer, Gus Outon and his brother Pete. They did custom breaking with oxen. They lived on the Charley Brown place across the river. After the house burned down, they left the district. The story goes that Pete gave Gus a cowboy haircut. A few drinks of whiskey and Pete mounted his horse, and Gus stood

up for the haircut.

Pat Raymond farms the Outon place now. Just west of the Outon's was our old friend, old 'Dad' Raymond. He come about 1900 or sooner. They were real pioneers from Dakota. The Raymonds were known for their hospitality. Dad had a heart as big as an ox, no one ever left Dad's place hungry or had to sleep out in the cold. They took a great interest in the building up of their district, and were real neighbours to everyone. Charley lives in Lacombe. He married Anna Ebeling. Charley was in the furniture store and undertaking business at Lacombe and is well known to all of you, so I guess that I will leave it at that. Asor, or Ike, as we call him, lived on the Bill Evernden place for many years. He is greying, married a schoolteacher. They had two sons. One son lost an arm in a feed grinder when a boy, but takes his place along with the others. Ike held a sale a while ago, and now is building a new home in Lacombe.

George Raymond died several years ago. His son, Pat, farms the Dad Raymond place and the Gus Outon place and is quite a successful farmer. Mrs. Sanford Allison was a Raymond, as were Mrs. Ed. Hawkins and Mrs. Bill Hankins, Mrs. Bill Cummings, and Mrs. Jean Skeels.

Another old-timer just south of Mr. Raymond's was a big hearted pioneer, Mr. Bill Everden and family from Missouri. Bill claimed to be a neighbour of Jesse

and Frank James. Dad, as he was called, was quite a veterinary in the early days and was in demand among the early settlers.

Mr. and Mrs. Everden have been dead for a long time. Jesse married Mary Cole, and they are well remembered by all the old-timers. Jesse was Secretary-treasurer for many many years, and both took an active part in building all that was for the best in the district. I have lost track of the rest of the family.

South of Bill Everden's place was the George Deaver farm. They did not stay long. Preacher Cole an old-time Methodist preacher, farmed several years. Mrs. Cole was poorly, and they retired to Bentley, but are both gone now. Then, Bert Williams lived there with his brother Jake for several years. Now Jack Rogers lives on that farm. Jack was in the Dairy business in a big way for several years. He dabbles some in politics and generally wears a big smile.

Just east of Forshee was Ed. Hankins' farm. They raised four children, Bonnie, Mrs. Fred Read, Irene, who died several years ago, and Ross, who married Lillie Graham who was Charley Graham's daughter. George Hankins left this district long ago. Ross and George served in World War 1. Ed. Hankins was of a cheerful nature, and made many friends, for he was always ready with a helping hand to anyone in need.

The Charley Raymond homestead was farmed by John Gardner of Manitoba. They built a barn and broke out more land,

GARRIES

HARDWARE SPECIALISTS

Complete Farm Supplies

PHONE 23

BENTLEY

but they son left this district and Eugene Skeels bought the farm. Mrs. Skeels was Florence Raymond. They raised and fed lots of cattle and hogs. Gene was quite a horseman and Mrs. Skeels a good horsewoman. They made a very nice farm and were preparing to make a new home near the road, but Eugene passed away a short time ago. Mrs. Skeels has the reputation of being a great butter-maker. Most of their children live around Bentley and Wetaskiwin.

Across from Gene lived Mr. and Mrs. Bill Hankins. Mrs. Hankins was a Raymond who came from the same district as the Raymonds did. Their son Abner married Cora Brown, Charley, or Chuck, married Ada Buckley, Emmet married Katy Hunt, and Will married Goie Peterson's daughter. Edith married Gary Palmer, and Anna married Dale Palmer. None are around here any more.

Some two or three miles north east was Shirtcliff's place. They probably came in 1902 or 1903. They lived close to Gull Lake, where the old Cummings Mill was situated at one time. They bought a lot of C.P.R. land, but did not farm on a large scale. Their two sons, Henry was a railroad man and never lived for long in Alberta. They lived in the U.S.A. Allie is well known in the Bentley and Rimbey districts. He was a shrewd business man, ready to buy anything from a pig to a bunch of cattle or a farm, or anything that had a promise of

profitable returns. He married Jean Marshall of the Rimbey district. They farmed quite extensively and raised livestock, but moved to the U. S. several years ago.

The next farm south was Geo. Ward's. He was here when I came. George was a down east Canadian. He never farmed in a big way, but was very exacting, everything had to be done just so. In 1907, he married, but the first Mrs. Ward died, and a few years later, he married again to an Ontario lady. Edith is well known and very highly esteemed in the Outlet district. George passed away several years ago. Mrs. Ward moved back to Dresden, Ontario. Ken Sweetman farms the Ward farm and his father's place, the Bill Sweetman place. Mr. Ward was the brother of Mrs. Sweetman.

The Sweetmans came about 1912. Bill was a smelter worker from Trail, B. C. He made a fine home out of wild land. They were very hard workers and the very best neighbours. Ken lives on the old home place. He married Ruth Craig, a near neighbour and a school-teacher. They have three children, Stanley, Kay, and Allan. Ken's sister, Eileen, lives in Ontario, and I cannot say much about her. She has been back a time or two, but not to stay.

South of Ward's was another old-timer, Vanvalkenberg, of Iowna, Michigan. Van, as we called him, was hardboiled. He seemed to have considerable trouble with his neighbours. He was a

Morrison & Johnston

HARDWARE

PHONE 12

BENTLEY

good blacksmith and did a lot of work for the neighbours. Plowshares were a big item in those days. Van caught three skunks and took the skins to Rimbey and got 50¢ each for them. He promptly told the merchant that he was a worse outlaw than Jesse James, for Jesse shot a man for his money, but the merchant paid such a low price that the poor man starved to death very slowly.

Across the road and a little south was Jimmie Sherrock. Jim was here when I came. He was an educated old-country Englishman. Later, his brother Walter and two sisters arrived from the old-country. The girls did not stay long, nor did Jim farm much. Later, he and Walter ran a store at Gilby. I have since lost all trace of them.

Just south of Jim's was the Fred Stevens homestead. He married Rose Jones, but they did not live together long. Fred went into business guiding with ponys and pack horses in a big way, out west of Rocky Mountain House. He guided some noted men, such as Conan A. Doyle, the English novelist, and Mr. Washburn, and many more well-known persons. Fred was a good entertainer, a keen bear and big game hunter, and guide. He also was a great beaver and martin trapper and had many friends among the Indians as well as among the white folk. Later, he went into partnership with Sid Read in a fox and fur farm in Montana. Fred passed away many years ago.

Henry Castleman got the Steeves farm. He married Sopha Larson, from south of Aspen beach. The old Fred Stevens shack was a landmark for many years. The Castlemans made a very nice home and were the very best of neighbours. Then Henry bought a quarter section a half mile to the west of their home, and they made a nice farm of it. He was a good farmer and raised a lot of hogs. Henry was a good thrasher, and owned his own machine. He passed away a few years ago. Their daughter, Doris, taught school for several years and then married. She now lives in the Pine Lake district. Don got married not long ago and is taking over the old place. Mrs. Castleman has a nice home in Bentley. It never seems the same after losing one of these real friends and neighbours. Henry and I have on the Outlet School Board for many years and he always took an active part in any activity for the good of the neighbourhood.

Across the road, a little south of Stan Walkers' farm is the George Bentley homestead. George and his wife Mary and son Jimmie lived there. They came from Michigan about 1900 or sooner. George was a sawmill man and sawed for the Cummings for awhile. He was a politician, trader etc. and built the house that is on the place. It was there when I came. They milked quite a few cows and probably had the first cream separator in our district. George had a bunch of what was known as "A" cattle shipped in

The Bentley Mercantile

GENERAL MERCHANTS

W. A. HOLMES — Proprietor

PHONE 7

BENTLEY

from the east as yearling heifers. They were a fairly good grade of dairy stock. Mr. S. H. Welch, south of Gull Lake looked after the branding and dividing of calves and selling of the steers. There were several people who had herds of 8 to 12 of these A cattle pronounced AL if I remember correctly. The company took their share in two-year old steers. However it may have been a good investment for the A company. It gave the farmers a meal ticket as they got all the milk and half the calves and there was some very good cows amongst them. Times were hard and money was scarce too. The Slater homestead was east of the Vanvalkenberg place. The house was vacated about the time I came. Some of the family lived in Lacombe and one of the boys worked at the Puffer Meat Market. Agnes Slater was George Cummings first wife. The place was known as the McMaster place I believe Ray Gideon owns it now.

South of the Bentley farm was the Charley Whitworth homestead Mrs. Whitworth was a sister to the Palmers, Ben, Lill and Brady. She was known in our district as aunt Vanny. Charley served as councillor for many years. He also served on the local school board a long time. He was quite a politician; and moved into Bentley a long time ago. He died several years ago, but aunt Vanny lived to a ripe old age and left us only a few years ago. She was very highly respected. Most of the families are in this district, Minnie, Mrs. Fred Ellsworth, lives

in Bentley, has quite a large family, most of whom are living in the district. Walter Whitworth known as Jake, married Ida Wetzel — they are both gone. Mammie, Ben Hick's first wife, has been dead a long time. Bert married Clarence Riddle's widow. They live east of Forshee. Nellie, Mrs. Ronald Wetzel, has a grown-up boy and girl Phebe, Mrs. Ray Gideon, and their son Chester and family live about 6 miles north of Bentley. They are quite prosperous hog and cattle feeders. Tom was a grain buyer for some time and has been dead for several years. Bell married Geo. Graham Jr., son the late Mr. and Mrs. C. O. Graham. They farm near the chapel school, have a nice home, are good neighbors. Fred Whitworth lives on a farm in Saskatchewan. He married a Rudd girl. They are on a farm and have a family.

The Bob Jones family were real old timers probably came in 1895 or sooner, Rose, Mrs. Fred Stevens. The last I heard of Jimmie he was a Chiropractic doctor, and I have lost trace of Jobe. The Jones were great musicians and stage performers. Old timers say they put on a play or performance in Lacombe and other towns billed as 'Rose—James and little Bando' I presume Jobe; if so I never saw the show. The Jones were old country English. Old Bob used to say he "heducated their 'eels instead of their 'ands" so they were better at dancing than farming. It was said that they had a 'ouseful of musical instruments. I be-

White Rose Service

Bulk and Retail — Cockshutt Implements

C. HAARSTAD & SON — Proprietors
PHONE 36 BENTLEY

lieve that Bob Jones was the first man buried in the Bentley cemetery and Laura McGrew, Mrs. Laura Moore, may have been the first woman.

Andrew Gillamaud lives on the old Jones place. He has made a real up-to-date farm of it, quite a gardener and fruit grower as well as a grain and livestock raiser.

The next old pioneers were the Smith Read homesteaders. Mr. and Mrs. Read came about 1902. Fred was about grown-up, but Sid, Ada, Norman and Morris attended the Outlet School. The Reads were great painters and decorators. I've never heard of Morris painting and he is a railroadman in the U.S., Norman painted some but never made a profession of it. Mr. Read painted around Lacombe many years ago. Fred and Sid painted for the C.P.R. for many years as well as in Lacombe, Bentley and other districts, and Norman ran the farm. Then Fred married Bonnie Hankins and started farming on his own — built a big house, made a success of farming and livestock raising and sold out to Ray Gideon. Sid painted for years — got married and later moved to Montana. He and Fred Steeves went into fox and other fur farming, later on Fred Read went down there and raised fur and trout. Norman Read married Lilia Larson. They live near Forshee and have one of the best landscaped farms in the district. Their son Frankie and wife Violet Stevenson, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Stevenson, have a house and live on the Norman Read

farm. Ada Read married a Hankins, I believe he was a nephew to Ed Hankins. The Reads were a very industrious family and real pioneer neighbors.

Mr. and Mrs. Lorne Weice live on what was Ada Read, Mrs. Hankins place, or is known as the Vanvaulkenburg homestead. The Roy Slaughter place just across from Lorne Weice place is the John Ingram home. John married Roy Slaughter's widow; she is a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Len Snow; they farmed on the west side of the Blindman river.

Jack Turnbull lives on the Smith Read place and farms half a section. He has made a farm out of what was quite heavy timber. The Turnbulls built a modern house and raise hogs in a big way and lots of cattle. Jack served in World War I, his son Dave in the last war and another son Robert is in training in the air force.

Another old timer, Mr. and Mrs. Barnett came about the same time the Reads came. Mr. Barnett was a painter and did not make much of a success of farming. He was able to drive a hard bargain as I was laid up with a bone felon, I hired Mr. Barnett to stook 30 acres of winter wheat. When he presented his bill he had 31 acres and when I asked about the extra acre he explained that the binder dumped the bundles some 10 ft. outside the field, so it made 31 acres. I promptly refused to pay for the extra acre and I supposed it was forgotten. A few years later the Barnett girl came for a couple of dozen eggs and ex-

Red & White Store

M. S. WITHERELL

GENERAL MERCHANDISE

PHONE 30

BENTLEY

plained that her daddy would pay for them when he saw me the next morning. Bill Hankins took them to Lacombe on their way to Boston so Mr. Barnett got his fifty cents for his extra acre. We have had many a laugh about it since.

Another old timer was Carl Nelson, a little Swede. Bill Peterson owns the place where Carl was harness maker and cobbler. He did very good work, was a sharp trader, a good farmer, but did not stay in Alberta very long. The last I heard he was running a shoe shop in B.C.

Another real old timer was George Snowden, an old salt water sailor. Mr. Snowden was quite well educated, never said much about his past and it seemed a mystery to most people. George was a good honest man, very conscientious; for many years he could not prove up on his homestead because he did not want to be a British subject, but had to before he could prove up, which he did very reluctantly. George was a well digger, a hard worker, and a Seventh Day Adventist; he left in 1914 for Washington, U.S.A. George told me of one incident — he did not trust banks, as he was going away to sea he got a lead pipe several inches long just big enough to hold twenty dollar gold pieces with a bottom and thread top, filled it with twenty dollar gold pieces and buried it in a creek bottom. When he returned some three years later, it was safe and sound. George was rather odd but he left a host of friends.

Earl Adams homesteaded N.W.

2-41-1 W5M. He married Cora Marshall of Rimbe district. He was quite a big game hunter and not too particular about the game laws. I've lost all trace of Earl. Bill Peterson has a nice house on Earl's old place. The quarter section east of Earl's must have been old man Adam's homestead. Mert Chandland got it later. Mert was a real go-getter and made a real home of it, raised a lot of hogs, cattle and grain, had about 900 acres sold to the Soldier Settlement Board. Howard Morrison lives on Mert's home place, has about 240 acres, Dave Turnbull has 320 acres, Roy Dickau has about 200 acres including the Geo. Snowden place and Don Dickau has about the same; so four returned men farm the Mert Challand farm and all seem to be doing fine.

Jens Larsen was here when I came, he may have come in 1900 or before — a very hard working Dane, he married a Scotch Lassie, Miss Jesse Strang. Jens is past 80 years old, quite lively and I was told he was throwing away blocks from the wood saw last fall. His son Harry is just finishing a modern house, has been married several years. Charley lives with his folks on the old homestead and there are four girls, Mae, Lillian, Anna and Jean, but I don't know where they live — the Larsens lost a little boy several years ago.

Nels Larsen probably came in 1898 and may have been the first settler north of the outlet after the Jones and Cooks. Nels was of a quiet nature, never married and

Valley General Store

Groceries and Dry Goods

PHONE 8

BENTLEY

lived alone on the banks of the Outlet quite near a high bank or canyon. Nels said when he came there was a great pile of Buffalo bones, two or three hundred or more, as if they may have been stampeded or driven over the bank or had gathered together for shelter from a bad storm and got snowed in. I might explain the Outlet creek flowed as an outlet from Gull Lake into the Blindman River, it has not run much the past ten or fifteen years.

Some 30 or 40 years ago a company drenched the Outlet Creek put in a dam to reserve water in Gull Lake for a power plant, part of the dam is in the mouth of the Blindman River where it empties into the Red Deer River. Quite a few residents along the hay meadows of Gull Lake opposed its construction north of Bentley. The result was that the company sent Bert Westlake of Leedale as watchman. I hope this is correct — while said watchman was in Bentley getting a grub stake the dam was blown to kingdom come. I have not the faintest idea who blew it up, but that settled the power plant for good. The water is several feet below the Outlet, in fact in some places in front of Jones place the water is about 80 rods from the shore of where it was 50 years ago — trees 7 or 8 feet high, and no water flows down the Outlet except for a few springs flowing into it.

About one mile east of the old McKilligan place was the John Erskine place; he was of old English stock and did not farm much. They

built a frame house — their son Ronald was brought up in the Bentley district, married and lived there for a few years but has moved away.

A quite famous and very highly esteemed homesteader lived just east of the Erskines was Harry Brownlow, an Englishman by birth, Conservative in politics, and Church of England in religion, may have come in 1899. Harry had a fair education, and served on the municipal council from the beginning for over 40 years and was reeve the last several years. Like all public men there were those who opposed him and if Harry was beat it never stopped him — he ran again until the time came that not many cared to run against him on the council. Harry's first wife was Lena McKilligan who died shortly after young Harry was born. The Lidge Osgoode family brought him up — he is well known around Bentley and lives in B.C. now. Old Harry married again — an old country lady — they did not farm very much but ran a small store and summer resort at Brownlow's Landing. When Harry was first elected on the council there were no roads and nothing to work with, but he made miles and miles of good roads and had a host of friends. He was buried in the Bentley cemetery. I believe he served in the Riel Rebellion with the Canadian troops; also started to Alaska in 1898 in the gold rush travelling the overland trail from Edmonton via Dunvegan and Peace River, but turned back

Compliments Of . . .

Valley Electric

RED GARRIES — DICK MOORE

PHONE 61

BENTLEY

when they got to Great Slave Lake (or some other large body of water).

Alex McKilligan came in about 1899 or sooner from Utah, built one of the first houses north of Bentley. Mr. Miles lived with them until they got a house up. I believe there were several homesteaders made their home with the McKilligans until they got their own homes. Mr McKilligan dug wells and later built chimneys and plastered. He lost his first wife, married again but she is gone. Alex was a hard worker, farmed and raised quite a few cows. He was very highly respected in the neighborhood and was buried in the Bentley cemetery. His sons Angus, George Sandy and Willie are all gone. Roy lives in B.C. and is a fire ranger I believe.

West of the Chapel school was Bob Woolgar's homestead and his brother Charley had a place close by. Bob farmed for several years, but soon worked at his trade as a plaster. He was an expert in making fire places, arches, chimneys etc. Bob has done this particular line of work all through central Alberta and many of the better homes have fireplaces built by Bob Woolgar and his son Charles who follows his fathers line of work and they often work together on the finer jobs. His daughter married Norman Wheeler and they live in Bentley. Charles married Mrs. Mildred Petersen's daughter, Mary Petersen, they reside in Bentley. Mrs. Mildred Petersen was a Carritt

girl. She is well known around Bentley and after losing her first husband worked in the different stores in Bentley about when Bob Woolgar lost his first wife. Several years later, he and Mrs. Petersen were married. They have a nice home across the street from the hospital and own several places in Bentley and rent them. The Woolgars are real old timers and grew up with the country, Bob is a very keen businessman, a very good workman in his line of work and a fine neighbor.

Joe Montgomery lived close to the Woolgars, near the Chapel School. Joe came in the limelight later on, but Joe was a pioneer homesteader near Forshee, was Irish and could scrap a little. The first time Joe was sent to the "Fort" for making moonshine he made it a joke of going to college and boasted of how he learned to make 7 year old moonshine in a few months, but later became very careful when selling to strangers. Joe was a spiritualist and consulted the spirits on several occasions. The story goes that on one occasion a couple of strangers visit Joe one night, Joe was canny and kept tight. It seems there was another man in the car that Joe did not know about. After waiting along time he became restless and in looking through the window he broke the window. Joe jumped up and said "I've grieved the spirits" and after locking the visitors inside Joe disappeared but soon returned with the required amount of wild moose milk or moonshine.

COMPLIMENTS OF:-

Lawrence Greif
BENTLEY MOTORS

Dodge & DeSoto Dealers — Goodyear Tires — North Star Oil
PHONE 31 **BENTLEY**

Jay Ashtons homesteaded in the early days where Sandy Freeman lived. He married Mae Castleman, Henry's sister. They did not live here very long. I hear that Jay was burned to death in a forest fire in Alaska and that Mae had married again. They had one son.

Wilson Cox lived west of the river, his wife was a Castleman girl. Mrs. Cox died many years ago leaving four girls and Wilson was both father and mother to the family for quite awhile. Grover Robson married one of the girls and I believe one married Bob Stoner and I cannot remember much about the rest, Old Mr. Castleman was not here when I came and Mrs. Castleman had a large family. There was a girl Birdie — Henry — Bruce — Dewey; one was killed in World War I.

South of the Castleman homestead was Ab Warner. I believe his wife was a Castleman girl too.

Charley Cox a brother of Wilsons, lived west in the hills; his wife was an Evernden. They did not stay long in Alberta.

North of Wilson Cox was another old timer, Charley Brown. He lost his first wife, had two or three children, then married again; his second wife and some of the family still live on the homestead. Their house burned down years ago when Gus Outon was living on the place but Charley built another house and quite a large barn. He was a good farmer and a successful trapper and big game hunter. Several of

his sons go out west of Rocky Mountain House every fall and there are some real hunters amongst them. Bruce commenced hunting big game when he was about fourteen years old and has been going hunting for about 20 years or more.

Alex Monroe lived some two miles west of Centre View School, did not farm much and was a butter maker by trade. He ran a vulcanizing plant in Bentley for a while and was a Justice of the Peace, I believe. He passed away many, many years ago.

The Clarence Osborne family bought Mrs. Castleman's place and the Ab Warner place about 1905 or 1906. Clarence's father lived with them for several years and died on the place. Their three boys, Ralph, Merrel and Roy are well known around Bentley. The Obornes did very well on their farm — raised cattle and hogs, and if potatoes were scarce Clarence would have a few hundred bushels for sale, or a few tons of hay or Timothy seed — always seemed to have something to sell. Later he ran a second hand shop in Bentley and Ralph ran a tin shop. Ralph and Merrel have been at the Turner Valley Oil wells for many years, they are both married. Roy married Edith Linder and are both well known in the district. Roy bought grain for several years and then farmed north of Bentley for several years where they raised cattle and hogs and milked cows. Later they moved out Gilby way and farmed Mr. Linder's place, Mrs.

HEAVY HARDWARE

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Sales — Radio — Service

PHONES: Bus. 18, Res. 45

BENTLEY

Oborne's father. They raised a nice bunch of Herefords and now live at Water Valley.

About this time Mr. Wm. Calkins moved near the Horseshoe ponds, what is now known as Calkin's Valley. There was a large family of the Calkins: Wallis, Charley, Willis and Frank all had homesteads nearby and there were several young sons — the saying was that there were enough Calkins boys and sons-in-law to make a baseball team and Dad Calkins the referee. Mr. Calkins carried the mail from Lacombe to Bentley and as far as I know never missed but one day in his many, many years as mail carrier — there was and still is some very good hockey and ball players in the Calkins families.

His grandson, Elmer, is well known in the Bentley district. The first I heard of his garage work he carried his few tools in a truck that Mr. Eaton had hauled mail in. Elmer came right to the farmers to repair their tractors etc., then ran a small shop in Forshee, then started a small shop in Bentley, then ran a shop and John Deere agency where G. M. Farrell is. Elmer and Lawrence Greif then bought the Martin Garage and remodelled it. Elmer now runs a fleet of school buses. He married a John Anderson girl of the Forshee district. Elmer is an up and coming businessman of Bentley.

In the early days of the settling of the Calkin's Valley a Mr. Lockhart located there, later he ran the post office, known as the

Lockhart Post Office. I believe Mr. Lockhart carried the mail several years but it has been closed for several years. At the corner is the Lockhart school, the Lockhart Hall and the United Church, quite a landmark of the old pioneer days. A son-in-law of Mr. Lockhart, Jim Richardson, lived near the hall but none of these stayed in the district very long.

Vm. Smith from Michigan and his son Walley lived about a mile north of the post office. Mr. Smith was councillor for several years, also game warden, but the deer season seemed to be open most of the year for the Smiths. But they made many friends and later returned to Michigan.

Frank Pike lived just across the swamp west of the school, he did some custom breaking. His son Orton lives in the district, he married George Wilkin's daughter and they have the honor of having two pair of twins in their family. I will not attempt to count the singles.

There is a whole raft of Jaffrays, Jim was councillor for many years. Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. Earl Stephenson and Mrs. Geo. Fernie all were Jaffray girls. And there were several brothers and their families — in fact there was quite a large Scotch settlement around there.

Mr. and Mrs. Ansley Steves from New Brunswick came about 1911 from near Iowa. Steve broke several acres for me, he did a lot of brush breaking with his John Deere tractor. If I remember right their house burned down at

The Bentley Drug Store

A Good Place To Deal For:

Drugs, Stationery, Veterinary Supplies, Freezer Fresh Ice Cream

BENTLEY

ALBERTA

Iowa, and burned up a little boy.

Geo. Fraser was another old timer in that district, a blacksmith by trade. George was quite a public man, served on the council for several years, had a comfortable home, left a host of friends when he passed away a few years ago.

Another Scot and quite a prominent figure was Mr. Duncan Layton. He has taught school for many years. Mr. and Mrs. Layton live at Bentley and are quite active in church affairs, very highly esteemed wherever they were known. A brother of his was a minister in the United Church at Lacombe — I hope I have this right.

I think I had better move back where I am better acquainted. Cal Moulton, just south of the Centreview, still live on the old homestead. Their family are all out on their own now. Cal was a cowboy by nature, a good farmer and neighbor and still wears a big smile.

Just west of Centreview School was an old timer, George Justice. He was married to a Bill Evernden girl, but they never lived in Alberta very long.

The Ferd Martin family came sometime later but really are old timers; their house burned down in the early days, the neighbors gave some donations and the Martins did well. They were very hard workers, as they got older Mr. and Mrs. Martin raised many excellent raspberries. Mr. Martin passed away not long ago. Mrs. Martin lives on the home place and

her son Clifford farms it. Most of the family live near Rimbey and Bentley, two daughters are at Stettler, a son-in-law George Robertson was accidentally killed by a tractor east of Blackfalds recently.

Another old time family is the Frank Miles family on the hill just south of Centreview School. Mr. and Mrs. Miles have been dead a long time. Mrs. Ted Zeluf is a Miles, also Mrs. Claude Wright. Claude passed away a short time ago. Milton and Walter and their two sisters Emma and Lotta all remain single and live together on the home place — milk a few cows, raise some hogs and chickens.

Another old timer Hollrope, I think he ran a store in Lacombe in the early days, prospected a lot in B.C. — had some luck they say. George only had one arm but was able to an awful lot of work. Otto Simons family took care of George the last few years before he died. They lived on the Bill Hankins place farming and milking cows. Otto went to war; — has been back here a time or two but never lived here after the war.

Now we come to our old friends Mr. and Mrs. Mickey Saint. When they first settled on the west side of the river, neighbors were few and far between. Their children were small and those were lonesome days. Mrs. Saint and Jack Suggett were brother and sister. The Suggetts lived on the east side of the Blindman, their farms joined but with the river between.

C. M. Farrell

John Deere Implements

Firestone Tires — Frigidaire - Connor Washers — B. A. Oils
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PHONE 1

BENTLEY

Mickey and Jack were old coal miners and worked in the mines near Fernie, B.C. In the winter time the older Mr. and Mrs. Suggett, Mrs. Saint's folks, lived with them most of the time. The Saints did well at farming, later they retired from farming and had a comfortable home in Bentley. Mickey was from England. The story goes Mickey was working with or for the Suggetts and Miss Lizzie Suggett got many a laugh about the green Englishman but finally wound up as Mrs. Lizzie Saint. Beatrice Saint is now Mrs. Wilford Thorp, the nice lady in the Bentley Post Office and Mrs. George Beddoes was Gertrude Saint and Miss Deloris Saint is now Mrs. Reg Snow. Johnnie Saint is in Edmonton and was a mail carrier for many many years and may be yet. Mrs. Saint went first; for a long time Mickey was the oldest man in Bentley. Mr. and Mrs. Saint had the honor of receiving congratulations from the late King George on their 60th wedding anniversary.

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Suggett, commonly known by their friends as Jack and Maud, came about the time Mr. and Mrs. Saint came. They were real old timers and lived for a few years near the river, then bought the half section from Mr. and Mrs. Adams. They were great workers, built a large barn and a modern up-to-date house. Jack was a good farmer, he had been quite an athlete, in fact had been champion light weight wrestler on the coast, was also a good foot racer and could

swing the clubs. Before coming to Bentley he was a miner and also took part in the Klondike gold rush. Jack took an active part in all Co-Op. activities the Livestock Pool the Grain Pool and the Co-Op. Store. Jack had never gone to school much but was a real businessman, a money maker and a good manager, a real pioneer and the best of neighbors. Jack has been gone many years. Mrs. Suggett is getting old, in her 80s, and has been very active and a real neighbor. Cecil resides on the old farm as a modern farmer and hog raiser. Cecil made a real killing raising rye, he had 4 or 5 carloads of rye when it was at its peak. Mrs. Cecil was Gertrude Schoular. They have a family of six including the twins, Barbaree and Barry. Irvin lives just south on the O. E. Putman place, he married Bernice Witherell. Irvin and Dean are well known in sports both hockey and baseball.

B. F. Hicks is an old timer but not one of the first ones. He rented land for a few years then bought the J. B. McPherson homestead, and then the J. Hamer farm where he later made his home. He also owned land near Gull Lake. Ben was quite a horse man and cattle and hog raiser. He married Mammie Whitworth. She only lived a few years and he then married Lena Bardenhagen of the Gilby district. They lost one son and Oliver farms the old place in quite big way. He married Ruby Anderson and she died when their baby was born. Oliver married again. Ben retired

John Talsma

General Blacksmithing and Welding

BENTLEY

ALBERTA

to live in Bentley and has been on the village council for some time — served as reeve and may be yet. Ben was on the Outlet School board for many years. Henry Castleman and myself sat on the board together for many years.

O. E. Putman, an old pioneer was here when I came. Irvin Suggett lives on Putman's old place, he was an architect and carpenter, had taught school, had a good education, but was definitely no farmer, although after proving up on his homestead he also had a CPR quarter section. He bought South African Script and got land near Edson and proved up on 320 acres up there. He told me he once ran a 16ft pole down in the muskeg at what is known as Suggett's corner and found no sign of bottom about 53 years ago. I suppose he is dead now.

Al Shannon lived on the south side of the Outlet, the same house but remodeled, and the old barn are still on the place. The Shannons only stayed 4 or 5 years. They went to Oklahoma, U.S. He has been preaching for 40 or 45 years, he lost his first wife. He is past 80 but still talks of wanting to come up and see Bentley again. He would see great changes — the railroad — the highway — Calgary Power, all run through some of the land he owned.

Ludwig Larson farmed the same farm for many years; broke out a lot more land then quit the farm and ran a store in Blackfalds for a while. His daughter

Lita, now Mrs. Norman Read, and his son Olaf well known around Bentley was in the fox farm business. I believe he lives in U.S. now.

Then Ken Kerr and Jack Rae took over. Ken did not stay with the farm very long, he and Sons ran the Cockshutt business in Millet, but Mr. and Mrs. Rae lived there a long time and were good farmers and hog raisers. They have sold and retired in Bentley now. They were the best of neighbors.

Then there was the 1898 Klondikers. I will likely not get them all either; but Jack Suggett of Bentley, Jack Anderson, west of Bentley, Irvin Stanley (married Eva Austin) southwest of Bentley — he told me of his first job in Alaska was one one end a whip saw sawing lumber for a boat — Jack Southward near Spruceville Hall, Carl Thomas and his father out Lockhart way, and Mr. Aunger east of Rimbey. It was interesting to hear them tell of their experiences up the frozen north. Flour was \$1 per lb., eggs \$1 each and everything priced accordingly. I am sorry if I have missed anyone, but 55 years ago is a long time to remember all of them.

I might say that fish, prairie chicken, bush partridge, and rabbits were very plentiful in those days, or there might have been some hungry people. One neighbourhood, north west of Perch Lake, now Sylvan Lake, would not perch by the wagon-load, while others speared suckers in the different sucker ditches and fed

Dr. S. A. Weaver

PHYSICIAN & SURGEON

BENTLEY

ALBERTA

many of them to the hogs. There seemed to be no end of them.

Fishing through the ice at the north end of Gull Lake was a favorite pastime. At times, I have seen over thirty huts on the ice at one time. They still fish up there. I am told that Gull Lake has been good fishing for the past two or three years.

The Robert Stephenson family was here when I came. George, Al, Walter, Joe, Earl, Mae, Jesse, Gladys, and Laura. The Stephensons were farmers from Nebraska. I suppose that George homesteaded about the time that his father did. They had a few blacksmith tools and George sharpened snow shares. George did not aim to be a blacksmith, but he came in mighty handy in those days. The first time that I went past their place, Walt, Joe and Earl were boat-riding in a slough or small lake near their shop. The Stephensons built a large log house that may still be standing. They milked a lot of cows, and soon had quite a lot of land broken. They built a nice barn, and were prosperous farmers. Mr. Stephenson passed away a long time ago. Mrs. Ida Stephenson stayed on the homestead a long time after the family left home, and lived to a ripe old age. I always enjoyed a visit with her, she was a wonderful old lady. Her memory was keen. She left a host of friends.

George married Mabelle Miles about 1903, and built a log house on his homestead near George Garries' place. I helped cut the

corners on his house. I was in demand quite often cutting corners those days. Ed. Troubough, C. C. Miles, Will Garries, and I cut the corners for the Philo Slaughter house.

Al Stephenson died about 1912. Walt lives east of the old place, and young Robert Stephenson, Joe's son, lives on his grandfather's place and is just finishing an up-to-date new house. Joe lives farther west. Earl moved to Hines Creek in the Peace River District, and now is dead. Walt married Hazel Bigam, and Jesse and Laura both married Bigam men.

Otto Uhlig came with his father about 1898. Otto never married. He homesteaded where John Erickson now lives. Otto raised lots of sheep, hogs, and some good horses, but after his father died, he sold out and moved onto his father's homestead. The old Mr. Uhlig was a very friendly old country German, and a very good neighbour. Jim Robson's wife was also a Uhlig, as was Emma, Mrs. Ed. Troubaugh.

None of the boys, Otto, Carl, Fritz, and Willie are in the country now. Otto died several years ago. I heard Carl was out here not long ago, and I would have liked to have seen him.

Jim Robson lived near Bentley for a time, then homesteaded in the Lockhart district. Jim was a talented man, who took a great interest in the building up of his community. He was councillor for many years and took a great interest in the different Pools and

THE BLINDMAN VALLEY CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION LIMITED

HEAD OFFICE — PHONE 20, BENTLEY, ALBERTA

"Salutes The Pioneers Of The Bentley District"

everything to make the country a better place to live in. Jim had a very hard township to make roads in, for some parts were very hilly, but he did his best, and had the respect of his neighbours. Mrs. Robson died several years ago, but Jim lived to a ripe old age. He threshed for many years. His son, Grover, still farms in that district. He married a Wilson Cox girl, and owned one of the first automobiles in the country. Mrs. Chester Rimbeys was a Robson girl.

Another old pioneer was Ben Jaster, who lived in that district. He never farmed in a big way, but he owned a horse powered or tread powered thresher. It seems that he got it from the Olds School of Agriculture. I saw him threshing at Mickey Saint's, but he had a portable gasoline engine of probably six horsepower.

Ben Palmer homesteaded on what is now the Lord Gordon farm before George Graham owned it. Ben threshed with a horse power and straw carrier. He used to say that he would give \$1.00 an oat for every oat over three that anyone could find in a day's threshing. It seemed that there were bushels that went over with some of the steam outfits. George Palmer, a son, and Bessie, a daughter, and there was also a younger son, but I cannot think of his name.

I went to my first dance in Alberta at Ben Palmer's, with Willie McPherson and a whole wagon load. I had only been in Alberta a short time. I met Fred

Ellsworth that night, a real booster for Alberta. Bessie Palmer was a pretty good looking but Dick Embody never gave anyone half a chance; he finally got her but took lots of time. George Palmer married one of the Evernden girls. The Palmers did not stay in Alberta very long. Once, Ben Palmer disced on Christmas day, probably 1903.

Lell Palmer, a brother of Ben, lived where H. P. Hansen lives now. I don't know much about them. Little Brad was their son.

Old Brady Palmer lived across the road and a little west of his brother, Lell. I was at their place for a dance or two. He lost his wife, remarried, and she passed away many years ago. He lived in Bentley for some time. I believe that Guy, Dale, and Irvie were his sons. Mrs. Charley Whitworth was a sister of the Palmers but none are left now.

I am afraid that I cannot do justice to the pioneers in this district. Mr. and Mrs. Gerhard Haarstad came about 1900 from North Dakota, formerly from Norway. They were experienced farmers, and raised lots of cattle and hogs. Every spring, about the time that the rest of us were getting ready to start, someone would say that old man Haarstad had 100 or 150 acres of wheat sowed. They knew how to farm. Gus did not stay or else did not come when the rest did, anyway, I did not get to know him for two or three years after I had met the rest. Ed. has been gone several years. Alfred and Carl are

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Calkins School Bus

—CHARTERED TRIPS—

too well known for me to say much about them. Molly married Oscar Vig. She is gone. Carl is in business in Bentley. He was a good farmer and livestock feeder, Gus lives in Bentley and is quite a grain farmer.

Alfred was running his own threshing machine when only a boy 17 or 18 years old. He threshed for me and for others in our district for several seasons. It was mostly stack threshing. Sometimes it got very cold, with deep snow but he never let us down. Money was scarce and the thresher often had to wait for some of his money, but Alfred was never tough or hard-boiled with us. He took a great interest in his district and community, and soon was holding offices and positions that one expected older ones to hold. Alfred was no shirker, whenever there was work to be done and no one to do it, he did it, and soon he was on the school board, Municipal affairs, Councillor, Live stock Pool, a delegate to the Wheat Pool for several years, and has been Reeve on the Council for a long time.

Another old pioneer family near the Haarstads was the Casper Vig family, from Norway. They also farmed in North Dakota. Mr. Vig was an experienced farmer and livestock raiser. He brought his own farm equipment with him, including a steam engine, and soon had a large farm under cultivation. There were his sons, Oscar, who married Molly Haarstad, John, who married Alma Johnston, he served in

the first World War, but never came back, Marvin, Carl, and several younger ones. Mrs. Joe Stephenson was a Vig girl. The Vig's farm included a nice grove of Spruce, some 30 inches and over, of very nice timber. I don't know if there is any of it standing now, but they kept some of it for many, many years.

Another family, while not the first pioneers, but are real pioneers in the Valley, are Mr. and Mrs. Len Snow. They lived across road from Mickey Saint's. Mr. Snow is a carpenter, one of the few tradesmen that made a success of farming and livestock raising. He put up good buildings, kept sheep, hogs, and good cattle. He took an active part in the Pools and is a good neighbour. Mr. Snow was noted for being quick to dig down in his purse when anyone was in need or to help build up anything in the community. They have returned, and live in Bentley. His grandson, Alvin, lives on the home place. Their daughter, Mrs. John Ingram, lives only a few miles away. Their son, Reg, well known in the district, married Dolores Saint, and lives one mile west of the Outlet School. He is a good farmer, cattle feeder, and hog raiser, and farms on quite a large scale. He was one of the first to use rubber tires on his tractor, and uses up-to-date machinery. They are very good neighbours.

The McPhersons had a saw mill a few miles west of the Vigs Timber limit which they ran for

Nelson's Water Well Drilling

Well Repairing — Well Drilling

PHONE 1120

BENTLEY

several years. They started with Major McPherson, Charley, Willie Jamie, Jabez and Allan, but in a few years, J. B. took full charge. Then he moved the mill out west to other limits. He was in the business for many years, married Zella Osgood, and ran a feed mill in Bentley for some time.

They have quite an Orchard, of apples, crabapples, and a nice raspberry patch. J. B. and Zella hunt, fish, pick blueberries, camp out or stay home, and enjoy life to the fullest. J. B. once ran a steam thrasher. He came very near being scalded to death when the water glass was broken on the boiler while crossing a ditch on or near the old Whitesell place. Someone helped him to get loose or he likely would have been scalded to death. It was the worst scald that I have ever seen, still, he was able to drive his Ford home. Very few men knew how to drive a car in those days, and not many owned one.

Hans Skjonsberg came here in those early days, and they still reside on the old homestead. I believe that they are Norwegians. They had a large family and farmed quite extensively, real pioneers of the early days. Hans carpentered some along with his farming. They are getting quite old, although Hans had the misfortune to have his neck broken in a car accident several years ago. He survived, and lived to enjoy himself. I believe that Hans is the only one in that district of the real old pioneers. Indeed, there are many of their children

who came with the first settlers some are quite old men and women, but there are very few of the old pioneers, heads of the families left at the beginning of 1953.

There was also the Chrisinson family. I do not know much to write about them, only that they were old-timers of the early days. Some of the sons are still in the district.

Jack Anderson, formerly a miner from Fernie, and his family farm on a large scale. He took an active part in the Livestock Pool, the Wheat Pool, the C.A.D.P., and the Co-Op Store. He was a Klondiker of 1898. He passed away several years ago, shortly after losing his wife. Several of the family live out west of Bentley on and near the old farmstead.

I do not know so much about the Johnson family, only that they came here in the beginning of the century. We all knew O. T. Johnson, the Moose hunter, and I guess he got his share and then some. Julius hunted some too, but he went into the sawmill business, and I suppose that he still is. Alma married Joënnie Vig, but both are gone long ago.

The Bjornsons lived west of the old man Uhlig place. They were not much for farming but were blacksmiths and real machinists. The old man and most of the boys were very good workmen. Carl and Emil ran a shop in Bentley for several years, Sig had a welding business in Sylvan Lake for a time, then he and his boys ran a large shop in Rimbey,

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but they have now moved away.

I heard that Carl and Emil turned to carpentering and that Big Aspern worked west of Rocky Mountain House as an electrician. They were athletic and always ready for a wrestle and fun even if the farmer was waiting for his work. Anyway, there was more fun in wrestling and doing stunts than in blacksmithing, but they could make most anything that a blacksmith could and made many friends.

The Farris came from Michigan in the early days. They never farmed in a big way, and were friendly people. I would stay with them for a day or two in those days and hunt. John and I worked together in a lumber camp, but they are all gone now.

Tom Coats was here when I came. An old bachelor, he did not farm on a large scale, but he had fine landscaping around the yard. Afterwards, Frank Thorp put up a fine set of buildings on the place. In those faraway days of long ago, Charley Whitworth was freighting for the Oharrie Survey gang somewhere in range 3 or 4. Charley tied his team to the fence where George Pico now lives, and walked to Bentley. The Blindman River was on the rampage with the spring break-up; so when he and Tom later returned, the bridge was out. Tom went back to Bentley and Whit walked home. The next day, I went back with him and soon fixed up a raft out of the planks and timbers lying around. They both got aboard and I launched

the very clumsy craft. The first time that it came near the west bank, Charley grabbed some willows, and jumped ashore, but did not make it, and went drifting down-stream, very scared, and hollering at the top of his voice. I followed along to see what would happen, quite scared too, but still laughing at poor Tom. He finally landed safely, but he never forgave me for laughing at him. Tom Coats passed away many years ago.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Thorp are both gone, Frank just recently, I understand. Frank was intending to write a History of Bentley; I am sure that it would have been a lot better than I am able to do, but Frank is gone and I am trying to carry on with this.

South of the Coats place was another real old-timer, George Garries and family. They came in 1900 with his father and brother Arthur, from near Hasting, Nebraska. I worked for George in the spring of 1902, to break and drive 8 oxen, four teams strung out. He fixed a Verity plow and got some old separator wheels from Casper Vig. It was the first breaking plow I ever saw with a fore-carriage on wheels, and likely was the only one anyone else ever saw just, like it, but anyway, it worked quite satisfactorily. I drove the eight oxen and George was chief engineer on the plow. We did quite a lot of breaking for himself and others and put in his crop as well. He had brought in some very good horses. He had one team that he said

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PHONE 28

ALBERTA

were worth \$500.00 any day, anyway, they got swamp fever and he had to farm with oxen for a while. There were a great many horses that died from swamp fever in those early days. I lost 12 or 13 several years after because of it.

George quit the farm, ran a blacksmiths shop and sold implements. This was really the beginning of the Garries Machine Co. of Bentley. They have an up-to-date Marshall Wells Hardware Store. Paul, a son of George's, runs the machine shop, and Russell, a son of Will Garries, and his two sons, Gordon and Don, run the store and sell Farm Machinery. Mrs. George Garries and her daughters were 'hello' girls at the Telephone Office for many years. George Jr., a son, farmed around Bentley for a while, then carried mail between Bentley and Rimbey. The last I heard he was an Oil well driller and had a son drilling too. There was a John Garries who came in 1898, but did not stay long; and I do not know anything about him.

The Will Garries family came in 1898. They lived close to the George Garries place, but never farmed very extensively. Mr. Garries was a Minister, a very conscientious and a very fine man. They left Alberta long ago. Ralph and Russell returned to Bentley. Ralph farmed for several years and ran a truck for the Garries Machine Co. He was quite a hog man and raised Jersey cattle— but most people know the

Garries as well or better than I do. I understand that some of the Garries were looking for homesteads as the sun was setting on one of the hills near the Vigs settlement. The scenery was so grand that they named it Sunset Hill, and it still goes by that name by some of the old settlers.

Old man Garries came in 1900, settled on the east side of the river, but did not stay very long in Alberta. After proving up on the homestead, Arthur came in 1900. He farmed for a while. He and Philo Slaughter had a log hauling contract south of Leedale. They hauled the logs to the Medicine River. Johnny Farr and I loaded logs for them, until Arthur moved to Bentley. He probably ran the first chop mill in Bentley, then took up auctioneering, and then moved away.

The George Stephenson homestead was near George Garries' place. George farmed and raised livestock for many years, and ran a milk route for a time. He built a large barn and a new house, and bought more land. At one time, George had a Jack and a Jennie. I raised a mule from George's long eared, singing friend. George moved to Lacombe for a while where I believe that he and Bob McKenzie were buying cattle. Then he moved back on the farm and shipped cattle for a while. He lost his wife, Mabelle Miles several years ago. Their only child, Lawrence, married Clara Ellsworth. They live down Lanton way. George lives in Bentley. Some say that he

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BENTLEY

goes fishing nearly every day in the spring, and is very successful too.

Charley Urich and family lived near Rainy Creek. He lived alone for a while, then married a widow Mrs. Austin, from near Sparta, Wisconsin, near the place where I was born. She had a daughter, Eva Austin. They will be remembered by many of the Rainy Creek old timers. Eva married a Mr. Irvin Stanley, a Klondiker. I mentioned elsewhere that the Stanley moved to the High Prairie district. Charley Urich lived up there too and died quite recently.

John and Mrs. Shirkey came in 1903 or 1904. John was an old railroad engineer — an old southerner. Some of his ancestors had been slave owners. He lived on the banks of the Rainy Creek, fed a lot of cattle. He lost quite a bunch one fall — supposed to have been from using water from an unused well. John had been a contractor and at one time was used to handling large crews of men. I worked there one season and found him fine to work for. He had his own ideas and if one did what John asked them to do and did it his way, all was fine. For instance he would not let us use checks on the horses and they ate all the time; he only allowed us thirty minutes for dinner in hay-ing time, but we were at the barn and the horses unharnessed and fed by 6 p.m. Any time but haying our "hosses" as John called them, were in the barn and fed by 12, and we got our full hours noon-ing. John had been married be-

fore — had a daughter Menta, and she was full of pep. Mrs. Shirkey had been married and had a daughter, Ruby Deal.

On rainy days we would oil and fix harness, etc., on wet days, we hauled sods and built up the ground around the house. They built up a good set of buildings. Bob Hutchinson was our foreman, Mrs. Hutchinson our cook. Kitty Ritson taught the Stephenson school after the Hutchinsons moved away. Lelia Vleet was the hired girl, and there were five or six hired men. We had good times and enjoyed ourselves, ate our meals in the Shirkey house. Of course, John was always prepared for any emergency, for instance, if anyone would have been bitten by a rattlesnake, John could have produced the remedy. No one pulled off anything on Shirkey and got away with it. In one instance, there was a saddle pony left at the Ruben and Thorp feed barn, next morning, Bob Hutchinson went after the pony, but it was wet with sweat as if it had been ridden hard in the night. Soon after Frank, John appeared, and admitted that he had ridden the horse. John set a price on the pony where he did not lose any money, you may be sure, and told Frank to buy or — and Frank bought, "nuff said." Bentley has a Shirkey street. The Shirkeys left a lot of friends, but did not stay long in the district. I hear that he went back to railroad-ing again.

Across from Shirkey's was the John Blish homestead. He was

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BERT DeGROFF and his oxen team, taken about 1908. In the background can be seen Bert's shack which was a two-story building 14 x 16 feet.

foreman for Shirkey for some time. Everyone remembers the Blishs. I first met him on an excursion on Cumming's Boat. After he quit farming, they ran the Taylor hotel for a while, then he and the O'Neill brother ran a store, perhaps where the Bank of Montreal now is, or nearby. They did quite a business in those days. They kept their peanuts in a barrel in the back part of the store. Old Brad could sit by that barrel and tell yarns—and eat peanuts by the hour, until finally it got to be a racket. An elderly lady got to be one of the many barrel customers. Someone put a rat trap in the barrel and it caught the old lady by the hand, and that kind of put a damper on the free

peanuts.

John O'Neil enlisted in World War I, later, Bill enlisted, and Mr. Blish ran the store alone. The store burned down some time later — a hard blow to the Blishs no doubt, but John built across the street and ran that store for many, many years. Mr. Blish passed away many years ago. John sold out and now he and Lillie live in British Columbia. They were back to Bentley in 1952. He is a grand old man of a great family and had many friends. His eyes are failing him.

There was a Frank Peabody, and his father-in-law, Mr. Woods that lived close to the Blishs near Rainy Creek. They were all old pioneers. They sold out and

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ran a small store in Rimbey, I believe. Frank ran a blacksmith shop for awhile, then moved to a farm in the Lola district. Frank had the misfortune of having his eyes burned out by a demented old codger that threw acid or something in his face. Poor Frank must have suffered terribly; but the old man that did the deed died in the mental hospital in Ponoka or so I have been told.

The J. C. Carritt family came about April 19, 1901 from Lindsey Nebraska. J. C. had been a Depot Agent and a Telegraph Operator before coming to Alberta. There was quite a large family. They helped George Garricks break the sod with eight oxen on the Carritt homestead. Mrs. Carritt was a Peabody some relation of Frank's. She once showed me where she had traced their family tree back to one of the United States Presidents. I think that it was Grant. They prospered on the farm. They moved from a log house 12 x 18 that eighteen people lived in for six weeks to a big two story frame house.

They also built a very large barn and raised Angus cattle. Later, they moved to Bentley. Their son Fred ran the farm many years. He kept a nice bunch of colts, and raised sheep. Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Carritt bought a small holding in town and raised chickens, and started an orchard, the first that I heard of in our district. I went through it once, and I was truly amazed with what one could do with apples, -- crabs and plums, etc. Jabez McPherson

has several apple trees also and we had a nice orchard started on our farm.

The story goes that Mrs. Carritt was to give a talk on apple growing at some do at Rainy Creek, so she confiscated a limb of nice apples to prove what could be done in this district, but when J. C. found out his pet apples were gone he was heard from. While she explained she could demonstrate better with the proof before her, but someone said 'was pa mad!' The Carritts built a very nice home in Bentley but they are both gone now. She lived to a ripe old age. J. C. carried mail west and south west in the Rural District for many years. They were very highly respected. Mildred, Mrs. Bob Woolgar, lives in Bentley. Fred is just finishing a nice home in Red Deer.

Jud Carritt was well known around Bentley. He never married, was quite a hunter and trapper, and poker player. They coyotes were killing my sheep, 61 one year, and I was almost frantic. I hired Indians to hunt and trap, but no luck. Then I got Jud to come up. He showed me a few tricks, I trapped three coyotes, Chuck Hankins shot two, and our worries were over for that year. There was a Joe Carritt, but he did not stay long and was not very well known in the community.

Mr. N. E. Nelson came in 1902, his family came in September 12, 1902, and were neighbours of the Carritts in the States. Mr. Nelson was a blacksmith. Fred Nelson lives on the home place. One son

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was blacksmithing in Red Deer, likely does yet. There are a lot of Nelson sons and grandsons. Fred Nelson married Mary Carritt. Fred told me about the worst storm that there ever was when he had to call a doctor from Red Deer; they were twins, boys. The doctor told him that he should have charged double, but didn't. Fred was delegate for the C.A.D. Pool for some time. I always depended on the family when I was running for a delegate, there were lots of votes there.

I cannot say much about Mr. and Mrs. John Dane, who came about 1903, and were old pioneers. We were acquainted, but I did not know them very well. They raised sheep and other livestock besides farming, and were highly respected in their district.

Another old settler that came on August 10, 1901, was John Steel, of a rather progressive nature. He broke out quite a large farm. I sold John four oxen in 1910, for he, like a lot of old-timers, broke up his land with the reliable four-ox team. John served on the School Board in the pioneer days and took an active part in the building of his community.

I visited him in the hospital not long ago. We had a fine visit, reliving those pioneer days. of over 50 years ago.

Harold Steele, a nephew, lives on the Sylvan Lake - Bentley Highway.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hamilton were here when I came. There were Bob, Sam, George, Jack, Dick, and Addie, I believe Mrs.

Frank Farmer. I knew some of the family really well and have been in their home several times. They were real old-timers, but I don't know in what year they came, 1900 or 1901. I presume that they were from Michigan, and they were used to working in timber and farmed in a small way. They were real pioneers and good neighbours. I think that Don Surratt lives on or near the old Hamilton place. George knew a cant-hook from a muley cow and worked in lumber camps and log drives. He liked to hunt and fish and tell tall tales, a typical lumberjack and river hog like myself.

Jack was quite a horseman, travelled a stallion for many seasons. He never married, and died many years ago.

Dick did not live here for very long, and I did not know the other boys.

Frank Farmer married Adda Hamilton. I hope that I have her name right. They lived east of the Hamiltons. George lived close to his brother, Frank. They had homesteaded in Minnesota close to where I had worked, proved up there, and came to Alberta and homesteaded again. There were here when I came. They were quite ambitious and go-getters. They raised and fed cattle, etc. They sold out and moved out to Stettler, I believe. George ran a hardware store out there. I have since lost all trace of them.

Mr. and Mrs. Whitesell's old homestead, two miles south and a half mile east of Bentley, has a wonderful grove of spruce trees

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that they set out. I believe that it is called Evergreen Farm now. The Whitesells had lived near Blackfalds before coming to Bentley. They were real old pioneers but I do not know in what year they came. There were four boys, Charley, Delbert, John and Webb. John was in World War I. He Lynn McPherson and Tommy Codgings enlisted together in the Army. Webb was in the Navy. I believe that he, Caleb Morrison and Harold Hopkins were together. Webb seemed very much like his father. The only girl, Bessie, was quite a favorite in the district, but married and left this neighbourhood. Mr. and Mrs. Whitesell passed away long ago. Webb died very suddenly not long ago. Dell married Olive Vliet of Rimbey. They had four boys and one girl. Mrs. Dell passed away May 7, 1952. John lives in Edmonton, and married Gladys Stephenson. Charley does not live here now. Webb was quite a big-game hunter, once told me he had 107 notches on his old rifle. He said that he didn't put them all on; that confirms the idea that the Game Warden, poor me, often thought as I hunted some 12 or 14 miles the other side of the Bentley cabin. It was built on the Banks of Brewster's Creek. I think that Webb and J. B. located the place before that. The Bentley bunch hunted across the Baptise near the California and Snider cabins on their first hunting trips. It was a rough s.d. hill from the Snider cabin to the Bentley cabin. Some of the women

went along. Later, they had a good trail from the Bill Burr's Fur Farm across the Baptise to Tex Small's cabin, and some six miles on to the Bentley cabin, a very easy trail after fording the Baptise and up the big hill. Mrs. J. B. McPherson was generally in charge of the kitchen. They had four beds, were a jolly bunch and made it a real holiday. Game was plentiful and they always got a goodly share. The story goes that Webb shot a bear. They knew that Ralph Garries was coming soon. The men and their wives slept in the cabin but the others slept in a tent. Roy Gideon was appointed a committee of one to meet Ralph and direct him so that he would not see the bear. We don't know if he had had a drink out of a moose track or not, but everyone was anxious to go to bed or pretended that they were. Ralph was very talkative, but after a while, he started for the tent door. Everyone was watching for the fun, and it appears that Ralph was near the door before he saw the bear. He just said "Get out of my way, I am going to bed!" There was excellent hunting around their camp and the Bentleys brought home some excellent trophies. I suppose there were about a dozen business men and farmers that clubbed together and built a comfortable log cabin. They planned a year ahead for the next big hunt, had a good cook, and had a good time.

Mr. and Mrs. George Hopkins came here in the early days. My school mate Ralph Homes' was

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to build the house. Mrs. Hopkins was staying at the Homes'. July 10 I came to help build the house. In a day or two, I went with Ralph to get lumber at Cummings' Mill site, where Ray Gideon lived for several years. The Cummings had moved the mill to the east side of Gull Lake, but there was some lumber at the old site. We crossed the outlet near Nels Larsen's place, followed a high land trail north and west to the George Ward place and north $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mile where the lumber was. We came back south west, struck the old Buck Lake trail angled to the south east, crossed the Outlet on an old bridge west of the present bridge at the Al Shannon place, better known now as the Jack Rae place, now the Homes farm. Ralph Morrison's home was straight east. Well, of course we got stuck in the mud and we had to carry every board several rods before we could find a dry place that we dared to load the lumber. It took another half day to get it to the Hopkins place and a day and a half for a very tired team and two tired men to get the first lumber for the first house on the George Hopkins place, but who would have wanted miss the good old days. This is place where Harold made such a nice home later on. George was a railroad engineer. They farmed several years, then George ran the Post Office. Mrs. Hopkins died a long time ago. The other son, Harold's brother has also passed away. Mr. Hopkins ran the Post Office for

a long time after that, but is gone now. Harold married Dorothy Daimron. They built up one of the finest homes in the valley. I cannot say for how many years Harold has been secretary-treasurer of the district of Lorne, and is still on the job, but he sure has sent out a lot of tax notices, tax receipts, and has handled a lot of money for the district. They sold their farm a few years ago and now reside in Lacombe. Their boys have grown up and have good positions.

The Roe family are old pioneers that came about 1900, but I cannot remember the old gentleman's name. They came from Michigan, and were used to pioneer life. They farmed for a while, but as I remember them, they were quite old people fifty years ago, for Mel was about six years older than I am. He worked for the Cummings in the woods and at the mill driving a team. About the first that I knew of Mel he was hauling lumber to Lacombe. A lot of that 'Lbr' road was graded with slabs and gravelled with sawdust or shavings. We had lots rain, mud and mudholes and a fair supply of mosquitoes, buck flies, and "noseems" to keep one company.

Later, Mel married Miss Leola Vliet of the Rimbey district. They lived near Bentley, then farmed near Blackfalds for many, many years. Mrs. Roe died a few years ago, and Mel followed her about a year later. Some of their boys run the farm and another lives close by. Their daughter Mrs.

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Ethel Ansley, lives in Red Deer, and Mr. Ansley is a M. P. of the Social Credit party. He was Minister of Education for some time. He is the Independent Social Credit representative for the Leduc district. Nellie Roe taught school many years. She married Carl Erickson, a well driller, and now lives in Sylvan Lake.

Stanley Roe, Mel's brother, lived near Blackfalds, farmed and broke land around Blackfalds and Bentley. I have heard that he has sold his farm, but I have not heard from or seen him for over a year.

There are several families of real old pioneers south of Aspen Beach that most of the old-timers around Bentley know, but that I did not know very well. There were Martin Ides along the river, Art Tatlock lives on his old homestead, Mr. Ames, the Boode family that I have mentioned, Olaf Eggan and family, they have very good buildings, the Hedemarks, and several Millers, and Ivor Aarstad. They all came about 1900. Pete Lowes' were old pioneers. The John Larsen family, parents of Mrs. Sopha Castleman. Adler, Albert and Harold Larson were all pioneers at the beginning of the century—quite prosperous, but out of my district, so I can not write much about them. I saw Ruby or Rueben Lowe and he gave me a little information about his neighbours, but not much about himself. He was a son of the late Lowe, who lived over 93 years. Herman Lowe died quite recently.

Wm. Weise and family are real

old-timers. Some say that they came in 1898, that may have been the start of Weisoville, now Aspen Beach. They ran a stopping place, served meals for both man and horse. Mrs. Bert Thorp was Lulu Weise, and Mrs. Glen Marshall of Tees, was a Weise girl. Mr. Weise sold out at Aspen Beach and had a farm near Lockhart, I believe. Ralph lives on the place now, Carl was in the Co-Op Store for some time, and married Stena Veeffkind. Roy served in World War 1. He married Catherine Buckley. He has worked as carpenter, grain buyer, auctioneer, and what not.

Mr. and Mrs. Steven Welch lived south of Gull Lake as I remember. Mr. Welch took quite an interest in roads, schools etc., but of course everyone wanted the road built past their place, and of course the people with children needed the schools, not the old bachelors, but in the course of time, the bachelors got married, raised families, and used the schools too. There were some very hot and interesting confabs those days, and some harsh words especially if a bachelor expressed his opinion, but it never prevented them from being good neighbours. The old pioneer men and women had hearts as big as an ox, and soon forgave and forgot.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. French and their son, Angus and family, came about 1900 or sooner. Mr. French passed away long ago, but Mrs. French lived to a ripe old age. Angus too is gone. Alice married Henry Peterson, another old-timer. They lived on the Bentley-

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Sylvan Lake road. They built a fine farm with good buildings, and raised and fed a lot of cattle and hogs. Henry was councillor for many years. One of the boys lives on the home place. Henry is gone. Mrs. Peterson lives in Sylvan Lake. Big Bill runs the Massey Machine and store in Bentley. He married Florence Kenner, a nurse who lived in the Rimby district. Harold married Rhea Chowen, Ed Chowen's daughter. They are an up and coming young couple, and take an active part in the affairs of the community. They are quite successful farmers. The rest of the boys are well known in the district, but I am not acquainted with them.

The G. G. Nobley family at the south east corner of Gull Lake came about 1895. We used to go through the Nobley farm via Cumming's mill, via the Spruceville school. The story goes that Mr. Nobley killed a wagon load of prairie chickens in the Medicine Valley one fall. Some say he shot, trapped and poisoned 135 coyotes one year in the early days. Another road in those days, before we could go east from Gull Lake, angled north and east near the Sam Nicholson homestead, then probably via the Spruceville school. There were no roads until Cummings got to hauling lumber.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Cummings came about 1898 from near Saginaw, Michigan. They bought the Clink sawmill and ran it on the west side of Gull lake, one mile west, six north of Bentley

for a time, then moved it to the east side of the lake and ran it there for several years. It was there when I came in 1901. Bill and George were running it, or helping run it then. They built quite a large steamboat that they used for rafting logs from the north and west parts of the Lake. They often ran excursions and dances on the boat, and had some quite-large crowds on those trips. They took on passengers at Weiserville, Walker's Point, north of Harry Hansen's place (then Jones' point), Cook's point, and it seems that there were a couple of other points on the east side, then around the lake to unload us. Willie McPherson and George Graham made most of the music but there were lots of fiddlers in those days. Oscar Vig's Jimmie and Rose Jones, real experts with nearly any kind of musical instrument. I did some of the square dance calling in those days. Every one seemed to enjoy these excursions and boat rides.

A man by the name of Converse had a mill on the east side several miles north of the Cummings mill. He came out west with the Ebersols, or about that time. I cannot say much about him. I believe that Fritz Ebeling lives on the old Converse farm. Geo. and Bill Cummings ran a mill out west of Wittenburg, now Leedale, for a long time and both made themselves very fine farms east of Forshee. Ronald Wetzel owns the Bill Cummings place and Charles Cummings, George's son, farms in quite a big way on the old farm.

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Tom Cummings Jr., a son of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Cummings lived out Leedale way and ran a thresh-er, etc. — may be out there yet.

George married Agnes Slater, his first wife, she died, then he married Agnes Simonds, a sister to Mrs. Alfred Haarstad. Bill married Lena Raymond. George and Bill got a new J. J. Case steel thresher and Case Steamer about 1907 or thereabouts; I helped them thresh at Christmas time once and it was very cold. They got around three months stack threshing in those days. Bill Hankins generally was tank conductor, another cold job too. There were several large steam outfits about that time. Dan Murray, then Casper Vig, later his sons Oscar and John ran one. Alfred Haarstad, Jake Baumbach, J. B. McPherson, then Carritt and Nelson and others had steam outfits. Then Geo. Garries got a large gas outfit, then several others got gas threshers: Walt Stephenson, J. H. Suggett, B. F. Hicks, Ray Gideon, Roy Osborne and C. M. Furell and several smaller 3 to 4 horse teams; but the combine has just about ousted the thresh-in machine. It got almost impossible to get men and teams for threshing. Truck hauling and field granaries has done away with the farmers helping each other. Things have changed in the west from the hand fed straw carrier thresher to the self propelled combine.

I am indebted to our old friend R. C. Miles in answer to my question. The first church in Bentley was the Methodist Church,

now the United Church. Services were held in the Guy Homes log house in Bentley near where the Pentecostal Church now stands. The house was just being built and was the first house in Bentley. Guy built in October 1898. These meetings were held in 1899. In those days there were two visiting student ministers, one was an Anglican Church minister and the other, a Mr. Hoggeth, was a Methodist student. They stayed in Lacombe with the student minister there, a Rev. Mitchner. These meetings were held periodically during the spring and summer.

During services of 1900, the community got together on the prospect of building a log church. The settlers all promised to bring four spruce logs each to the site, the same lot where the United Church now stands. They also promised to give the money and labor necessary to complete the building. Practically everyone within a reasonable distance gave assistance to the church. There was not a lot of people in the district at the time, but those people and families contributing generally were as follows:

Garries, Stephensons, Slaughters, Shannons, MacKilligan, McPhersons, Homes, Miles, Putnum, Murrays, Ebersol, Urichs, N. Ross Hutchinson, Brownlow, Erskine, Veefkind, Osgoods, and Cole. The following are presumed to have laid or cut the corners, C. Miles, J. Murry, D. Ebersol, and J. B. McPherson. Rev. W. C. Cooper was the first minister, and stayed

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BOX 204

RED DEER

for one year. Rev. Ward was the second minister. The organist was Mrs. Arthur Garries. The first church board I am not clear on, but prominent in the management were Mrs. Slaughter, Arthur Garries, Wm. Garries, Mrs. Miles and R. Holmes; any or all could have been board members. The present United Church was built in 1911. G. E. Zeluf was the contractor, and Dick Sambrooke was the plasterer. Rev. O. E. Mann was minister at that time. Mrs. Harry Brownlow was church organist after Mrs. Arthur Garries during the life of the old church building, and for several years after the construction of the present church.

Rev. Ward also held services at Joiners' Mill. He travelled by horseback. Bentley was the only Post Office west of Lacombe so Rev. Ward would gather up all the mail for that district, carrying it in his saddle bags, so he always had a big congregation, and, since, he was in the habit of delivering the mail after the services, no one ever left until the benediction was pronounced. I might say that Rev. Ward was very well liked and made many friends in the Blindman Valley.

Sorry, but I have no data on the Adventist Church, except that it was moved in from the south east of Bentley a few years ago.

I am indebted to Mrs. Edwin Morsch for the following information about the Penticostal Church.

Rev. John Wood was the first Penticostal preacher. A. Dalby and A. Caristenson from Calgary

held services on Sundays for a number of years. On October 11, 1931, the district superintendent held a meeting and the people asked Mr. Andrew Dalby to be the first pastor under the Penticostal Assemblies of Canada. The first board under the P. A. O. C. was composed of J. M. Irskine, E. H. Morsch and E. C. Rud.

The congregation held meetings in the Hall until December 10, 1933, then started to hold meetings in the United Church. They moved into the new Penticostal Church on December 1, 1935. The lot on which the church now stands was donated by Mrs. Polling. The parsonage was built in 1944. Lillie Blisa was the first organist. The first secretary did not sign his name, but Mr. Edwin Morsch has been secretary every since.

The Roman Catholics built a nice big church a few years ago, but at present, I have no information that I can give about it.

Another old-timer was Bill Beggart, who farmed on the Bentley-Sylvan Lake highway. He lost his first wife long ago. They had a bad fire that burned the machine shed and did considerable damage. Bill had a nice set of buildings and made a nice farm. Later, he married Mrs. Dee Finch. Mr. Finch was well known in the district and was quite a horseman. Mr. and Mrs. Beggart moved out to B. C., near Vancouver, and were in the chicken business the last that I heard, and may be yet.

Bert Saunders of Rimby taught

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school in the Carritt district when he was young, and good looking. I hope that this is right, the teaching school, I mean.

Bud Damron, well known around Bentley, married Marie Fallis. They have been in the cattle and horse ranching business in southern Alberta, and are building for themselves a nice home near the Jake Baumbach place. They have two children. It is said that Bud shot a deer in the heel, and later when the deer was killed and the boys were jollying him about the low shot, Bud explained that he had not been sure it had had horns, so he shot low to slow it down to he could see if it had horns. When he saw that it had horns, he soon finished it. It must be so if Bud said so, or was it? Better ask Bud about his big fish, the one that was heavier than the big one that Jabez caught, and how many pounds of sand he and Frank Wright put in it.

The story goes that Frea Carritt while skating across Sylvan Lake one night, skated into a crack in the ice, and for a time, it looked very serious. But, by hooking a skate in the ice he was able to get out, but was very cold. When he got to a house his clothes were pretty badly frozen on him.

Another near casualty, a teacher of the Boyle school, I believe it was, fell through the ice in Sylvan Lake in about seven feet of water with his Ford coupe with his wife and three children, but all escaped with their lives.

Henry Stone was another old pioneer. He and Henry Peterson came about 1902 or sooner. Stone farmed in the Rainy Creek district and married a school teacher from Wisconsin. Their barn came very near being blown down by a cyclone that went through that district around 1920. Ted Zelui straightened it up and said it was quite a wreck. Henry was badly handicapped and sick for many years with asthma. They are both gone, the girls are all married, and one of the boys is dead. Morris lived on the home place for a long time, and now lives in the Markerville district. They are the proud parents of twins, about a year old.

A few years ago there were a couple of Rimbey hunters we will call 'Red' and 'Blackey,' with a couple of Bentley heroes we will call Mutt and 'Jeff,' out hunting west of Leedale or on the Saskatchewan, Mutt and Jeff had run down every trail or cut line, every creek or gully for the saying goes 'that they dare not go out too far in the deep woods, and had no luck.' Red and Blackey found bear's den, so the next morning, with our bold brave Mutt and Jeff all sallied forth on a bear hunt. After poking round the den and the bear refusing to come out, Red decided to go down and bring it out for our heroes to shoot. In a short time, Red seemed to make contact with Mr. Bear amidst tall swearing and supposed-to-be-bear growling, there was quite a commotion. Soon, Mutt and Jeff began backing backing.

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RED DEER

(At Grand Hotel, Rimbey, Every Saturday)

away. Mutt stubbed his heel, and when he got up, they ran a foot race toward camp. We never heard of anyone killing the bear. I can only say that it was the tale as it was told to me.

There was a 'bachelor, George Turner, who lived west. They say that he drove his Fordson tractor from Bentley to his homestead in the Peace River country.

The Collins brother drove an old Ford without any body. They just rode on an apple box. Very handy if you got stuck in the mud, just take off the box and lighten the car.

There was a Mr. Neiper, we all know the Neiper Hill on the Bentley to Sylvan Lake road. They were old-timers. There was a girl who was killed by a falling tree and was buried on the farm. Mr. John Dane read a scripture at the grave-side. I was not much acquainted with them. There was a son who farmed the the old place for many years.

In the early days there was a Frenchman who ran a saw mill at Sylvan Lake—seems that the name was Louis Loisselle, or something like that. Later on, they ran a hotel at the Lake.

Charley Rick farmer, raised garden truck and sold it at the Sylvan Lake resort for many years. They live in Lacombe now, a very nice old couple, keep quite well I am told.

Mr. and Mrs. Archie Young lived in the Rainy Creek district, then moved to Bentley for some time. He died at '87, and she lived to see 91, a ripe old age.

There were a Mr. and Mrs. McKee that lived out in the sticks in that district. There was also a Mr. John Green, but I did not know any of these folks.

I had an interesting talk with Mrs. G. W. Thompson, such a fine old lady. They came to the Carritt School district on September 13, 1904. They had a family of eight, if I remember right, six are now living. Reg is Manager of the shipping department of the Chrysler Corporation plant at Windsor. Frank runs the Thompson Motors, sells Austin cars, second hand cars, does repair work, in Red Deer.

Sid lives on a farm near Rainy Creek school and has a modern home. There is a married sister living in Red Deer. Another sister married a United Church Minister, Rev. Gordon, and lives in Edmonton. Mrs. Thompson has a nice little home out near Sid's place. She was telling me there was no school when they came, but school was held in the M. S. Church. They lived about one mile from the school after it was built by going cross lots, and about two and a half to the church. She was 81 years old on August 1952. For a time they had no water on the place. She and the children walked 1 1/4 miles to a spring on John Steel's place to do her washing. The children all thought it a real picnic, some carried clothespins, another the clothes-line, and some helped in carrying the clothes. They carried their drinking water from there until they were able to get

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RED DEER

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a well drilled. Yea, some of those old pioneers sure had some real experiences, but as Mrs. Thompson says, "We enjoyed it. I am sure that none of us would have wanted to miss that part of our lives, or go through them again." Frank and Sid flew down east to see their father last fall. He is 92, a carpenter. He built Johnny Farr's house many years ago.

James H. Morrison bought out the Ralph Homes place about 1904. He and Major McPherson were old school mates in Wisconsin. Mr. Morrison had a homestead east of Jim Robson's and also had a South African Script in Southern Alberta. I believe that he and Arthur Salley took out a script or something about the same time. Ralph Morrison lives on the old place half a mile north of Bentley. Mr. Morrison had a prominent part in obtaining the Charter for the Peanut Railroad. Several old timers advanced one hundred dollars each to get the Charter. Mr. Morrison was quite active in Liberal politics. Several of us enjoyed a heated argument on politics in the Garries Store between he and Mr. Sam Nicholson, a rank Tory. They were both well posted on their sides of their parties, and no doubt enjoyed the argument as well as we listeners, but neither could convince his opponent of his folly or mistake.

Mr. George Gunderson came from Black River Falls, Wisconsin. I suppose that he has been around Forshee and Bentley for thirty five or more years. He is

past 82 years of age, while his hearing is not so good, his memory is very keen, and he is very active for his age. He is a brother of the Coles, Mrs. Ludwig Larson, and an uncle of Mrs. Norman Read and Olaf Larson. George farmed near Forshee for many years, but has now retired and lives in Bentley.

Joe Grief and family came from the state of Washington in 1910, and can be called an old-timer. He farmed north of Forshee for some time, then in the Lockhart district for several years, and then moved to Rimbey, where he sold Cressy products for some time. He handles tomb stones at present, and, like the rest of us old-timers, is growing old. His son, Lawrence, born in 1912 is well known around Bentley, the manager of the Bentley Motors. He and Mrs. Grief take their part in the activities of Bentley and community.

I will try writing about Bentley, but I fear that I cannot do it justice. Ben Cook and son Al bought out the Major McPherson Store about 1902, added on a part, enlarged their stock, but did not stay very long. Then Putland and Thorp took over. Bert and Frank, later Bert Thorp ran a store in Rimbey, but Archie and Frank ran the Bentley Store and Post Office for a long time. I believe that the Bentley Co-Op was the next that enlarged their stock, and did a big business. The store burned down but built bigger and better. Then, the present Management took over,

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"IF IT'S POULTRY — WE HAVE IT"

THE FIRST LADIES' AID IN BENTLEY



Back Row (left to right) Mrs. J. F. Millar, Mrs. Alick McKilligan, Mrs. John Blish, Mrs. George Garries, Mrs. Percy Thorpe, Mrs. James Morrison, Mrs. Bert Thorp, Mrs. Herb Birch, Mrs. A. D. Millar, Mrs. Stena McPherson, (Second Row) Mrs. Archie Putland, Mrs. Brooks, Mrs. C. F. Damron, Mrs. Payne, Mrs. John Veeckind, Mrs. Jabez McPherson, Mrs. Clem Miles, (Front Row) Tissy Thorp, Mrs. Ray Miles, Mrs. Putland Sr., Billy Thorp, John Birch.

now known as the Bentley Mercantile, run by Bill Homes and sons. A big store, it carries a large stock of dry goods, groceries, and hardware.

However, all this time other Stores and businesses were being built. Orlo Urich, Bert Williams, Joe Uhl, John Blish and the O'Neil brothers all had businesses. Jamie McPherson ran a confectionery Store and Pool Hall. Mrs. Dee Finch ran a small store and filling station along side of the Telephone Central. Then St. John

O'Neil went to World War 1, Bill went a little later, John Blish took over, then Morrison and John-son built a hardware store where the Taylor Hotel was. After it burned down, the Garries' Machine shop, now an up-to-date Marshall Welles Store, Wm. Peterson built his hardware and has his Mass'y-Harris line of machinery.

Dr. Wm. Evans was Bentley's first Doctor and Druggist. I can not name all the Doctors that Bentley has had, but none stayed

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RED DEER

very long until Dr. Henry came. He was a young doctor, but soon had a very large practice. Then enlisted in World War 2. In fact, he was a veteran of both wars. Then Bentley was without a Doctor for some time. A few doctors came but did not stay long. Dr. Henry practised for some time after the war, then moved to Lacombe, and has a big practice there. Doctor Henry and family have many, many friends in Bentley and District. Then, Doctor Weaver came to Bentley and took over. He has a very large practice. He had another Doctor with him for a while but I believe he is alone again and very busy. Dr. Henry started a little hospital where Russell Garries now lives; then a start was made on the Municipal hospital. Everyone seemed quite satisfied, but in a few years it was far too small and an addition was built and Bentley now has a hospital to be proud of.

Grant Sanders runs the Drug Store and Lunch counter. There has been several drug stores between the small one Dr. Evans started and the present one run by Grant Sanders. There are other restaurants or Coffee Shops and a Licensed Hotel, there is the Bentley Motors — Carl Haarstad and Son run a garage on the south side of their Cockshutt Machinery. Paul Garries sells International Machinery and G. M. Farrell sells John Deere Machines, and Eugene Blish has recently opened a garage near the railroad in the west end of town. Eugene is well known

around as a very good workman.

Clarence Osborne ran a second hand store several years, but he is gone and the store has changed hands several times.

The Red and White Store known as Brown and Witherell has been in Bentley a long time, does a large business. Of course everyone knows Dooly Witherell and family. Dooly likes hunting etc. Carl Berg runs the old John Blish store, it has been enlarged and he has a nice business in groceries and a few dry goods.

Ted George does a big business in real estate, writing insurance, etc., and Mrs. George helps with income tax work.

Caleb and Ralph Morrison have recently sold their meat market to young Wilton who has been with them for some time. I understand that the Morrison Bros. will still run their up-to-date cold storage plant. I believe J. B. McPherson ran the first meat market, perhaps north of J. M. Farrells Machine Shop. I don't know what has become of it. Len Beddoes was his meat cutter.

Bentley has had several bad fires but they nearly all came back bigger and better; a creamery in the north end of town burned down several years ago. There has been several parties run the creamery then the C.A.D.P. took it over several years ago.

I believe the first blacksmith was Charley Woolgar, Bob's brother, probably 1902 or 1903; then Herb Birch, he stayed until his health broke down; then

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Central Block

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George Garries started a shop. I believe Ed Stinson was his blacksmith, may have had several. The Bjornsen brothers ran a shop; Charley Johnson and then Brown and Scotty Houston, later Brown and Wilson, then Johnny Adams and Charley Brown ran a shop on his own for a long time, then John Van Leest ran a shop for a long time. I don't know the present smithy's name.

Baxter and Gus Stevens ran the machine shop, took over from Gibson and Southerland Baxter moved away and Gus ran it alone. He is a great machinest, but needed about two more pairs of hands to keep up and he often worked overtime. Someone said Gus had a breakdown and has closed the shop. We hope he soon recovers, Bentley needs him.

There is the Bentley Plumbers, the Garries and Moore Electrical Shop, Mrs. Lulu Thorps Ladies' Wear, and another 'Ladies' Wear across the street on the street on the corner. There is also the Atlas Lumber Yard and Coal Shed etc., Mr. Tom Pye, the genial barber, runs the pool hall; Mrs. Merle McKiligan and Ester the "hello" girls at the telephone office have run it a long time. There is Glen Wright and his staff at the livestock Pool which does a very big business.

Bentley has a school and are building on another big addition, besides several small schools. Elmer Calkins runs some 8 or 9 school buses. Elmer built a very nice home a few year ago.

Bentley can boast of several

gas and water they will be second to none in Alberta. Bentley is well laid out and has several evergreen trees.

The Rainy Creek Methodist Church was built in 1903 out of round logs. Some of the men prominent in getting out the logs and putting them up were John Shirkey, Charley Ulrich, J. C. Carritt, N. S. Nelson, J. W. Steel, Frank Peabody and others. School was held in the church in January 1904. The first teacher was James McNicol, the first minister was Rev. Scott. The Rainy Creek school was built in the fall of 1904. Mr. W. A. Saunders, now of Ponoka, was the first teacher.

Bentley has a very neat and well kept cemetery on the east side of the village.

Bentley keeps up-to-the-minute in sports, nearly always has a ball team. When Tom Lorimer started the first A.P. elevator. He must have brought the curling bug with him; anyway he soon had a hustling bunch of curlers and they have never cooled off. They have a fine curling rink and skating rink, described better in another place. Rimbey boasts of its race horses; but I have never heard about Bentley having race horses, although there have been some very fine horses raised in the district. Ben Hicks had a pair of drivers that had the style and pep. The first horse of note was a Percheron Club Stallion, "Lanton," was, I believe, his name. Twelve farmers, some from Bentley and some from Rimbey, bought shares at \$300.00 each, thirty six

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hundred dollars. Dec Finch had a big Belgian stallion, a beauty. Smith Read and sons had a Suffolk Punch stallion, they got it from the Jaques farm out Alix way. There were several Roan Belgians in the district as well as some fine Percherons. The Bentley district contributed some very good horses to the Lacombe Horse Sales. I sold several that weighed 1,800 pounds and over, and one was over a ton.

Bentley farmers have contributed, and still do, some very fine bulls to the Lacombe Bull Sales. Several Bulls from this district have been sold at the Calgary Bull Sales.

One time when we had Sheep Sales in Lacombe, the Bentley district showed very fine rams and sheep, but the coyotes put a damper on the sheep-raising business.

The Bentleyites were always pleased to have C. F. Damron sell our livestock, for he was quite a booster for our district.

The Damrons are real old pioneers in the district. If I remember, the old gentleman and son Harry raised cattle near Tees. John and Clarence settled west of the Blindman. They were experienced cattle men, livestock raisers and dealers. Often, talking of Omaha and stock-yards, etc, they did an awful lot of fencing for those early days. They waded in mud knee-deep, fought mosquitoes and sand-flies, or 'noseeums,' told yarns, went to country dances, and made the best of it all.

Old Major McPherson did a

little auctioneering, then Art Garries sold for a while, then C. F. Damron commenced auctioneering, probably 48 years ago, and has never quit. He is one of the oldest and best known auctioneers in Central Alberta. It seems that he was just born that way—just commenced, and never got time to stop; through mud or snow, good roads or bad, near or far, if the people could get out, C. F. could and did. He was very well known all over the province, and has taken part in several Calgary Bull Sales. Dick is following in Dad's footsteps, but C. F. still holds up his part of the sales, and he is no spring chicken either. Mrs. Matt Damron has taken her part, and is quite a leader in Garden Clubs and in other activities in their community. Their son, Joe, passed away many years ago, hurt in a car accident. Bud, Dick, and their families live near by. They must have inherited the livestock business, for it seems a part of them.

C. F. Damron sold his first farm sale on September 17, 1909, for Mr. Clyde Evernden. Sale was held on the quarter section where the Centerview school was located. He has a bill of that sale framed. He has been selling bulls in Calgary since 1927, and is still selling. He has has charge of the selling at the Lacombe Bull Sale for 33 years or more.

Mr. and Mrs. John Damron came about the same time, or sooner than C. F. John drove a swanky team and democrat in

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RED DEER

those early days. John ran a butcher shop in one end of the Putland and Thorp store, then, started a shop across the street. I am not sure if John started it alone, but he and Bert Thorp ran it together. Then, Bert took over and John bought hogs and cattle for Burns, I believe, for a long time. Their only child Dorothy worked in the Bank for some time, married Harold Hopkins, and helped him in his office in the Municipal district. Harry Damron and family lived in Bentley for some time, helped in buying hogs, etc., but have now moved away.

Then there was Uncle Webb Damron. I never heard of his being a livestock-man, but it seems that he had been in some kind of store business. He could play and step dance when he was 75 or 80. He did a little draying, plowing gardens, etc., kept a team and worked some. When he got quite old he seemed to be restless unless he was busy doing something. Everybody liked Uncle Webb.

I will mention some of the others, who, while not among the first settlers of the Bentley district, are perhaps worthy of the name of old-timers. Billy Surratt and family, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Morach, the Henry Pico family, west of Bentley, Caleb Morrison, west, and Ralph Morrison, north of Bentley, and a brother Jim, who lives at the Coast, and on the Lell Palmer place was the weed inspector, Hans P. Hansen, and family. Victor Johanson

raised and fed livestock, Morris Holman and John Holman, Dan Liske, Bill Wetzel and wife, who was Anna Liske, lived on the John Shirkey place. The Wilsons live on the Charley Ulrich place, and Art Tatlock, Chris Zimmerman, Ernest Speaker, Chris has a son, live south of Speaker's. Ben Wareham, and of course his brother Dayton are well known among the farmer for his veterinary abilities, and is an ardent curler and has a friendly disposition. The Dick Cox family came, and Dick and one of the boys drilled wells all over the district, and still lives on the old farm. He has made quite a success of farming and stock-raising. Ed. Hansen came with his parents in the quite early days. His brother Harry Hansen married Edna Pico. They live on the old Fred Nellis place, and have built themselves a very modern home and a big barn and milk several cows, and have a nice farm near Gull Lake.

Charley Ross is really an old-timer. Norman Ross, his folks came in 1900 or sooner. Charley stays single and happy. Don Pearson, one mile east of Bentley, married a Dave Adams girl.

Bob Gibson lives about four miles south east of Bentley, and has been in that district for around twenty years. Bob is really an old-timer around the Lacombe district and grew up with the west. He has served on the council east of Lacombe for many years. Bob is quite a politician and yarner, has been census tak-

Sim's Auction Mart

BOX 453

PHONE 3160

RED DEER, ALBERTA

—AUCTIONEERS—

ALEC L. SIM — KEITH SIM AND GARFIELD OGILVIE

er several times. The first time that I met Bob, on July 10, 1901, he gave me a ride on a stallion. He was travelling from where the Spruceville Hall now stands via the Spruceville School to near Cummings' Mill, then to near Mr. Welche's farm and directed me to Bentley. He and I sat as delegates on the C. A. D. Pool board. He has a pretty level head and was a good delegate. He raises Jersey cows but we forgive him for that.

Percy Wilton, one mile north of Bentley where Frank Schooly lived. Percy was a butter maker both at Rimbeys and at Bentley, and a veteran of the first war. After he quit the butter making business, they ran the Bentley Dairy Farm and Milk route and was the right man in the right place. He ran a very neat appearing Dairy Farm.

The Jack Turnbolls on the Smith Read Place, Andy Guilemaud on the Bob Jones place, then Walt Riddle and his brother Clarence and Clara Riddle. They farmed with mules. Bill and John Ingram came about that time. The Charley Moore family came and lived on the old George Bentley place. From there, they moved across the river to the Clarence Osborne place. Charley had been a mortician on a street car, Mrs. Moore a school teacher. They were a very highly respected family.

Sam Nicholson was another real old-time pioneer who lived west of the Spruceville Hall many years before there was a Hall. He had taught school, been

a Methodist Minister, had run a store in Lacombe, a lumber-yard in Morningside, was quite a Tory politician, and lived where Jack Turnbull now lives. He milked Shorthorn cows, then changed to a fine herd of Jerseys. Fay, a daughter, now Mrs. Ray Hutton, lives east of Bentley and her sister, Mrs. Cumberland lives near by. They were both School teachers. Warland, a brother and a first World War veteran is a teacher, in fact, all of the Nicholsons except Hal were school teachers, and he married a school-marm, and several of the younger generation of the Nicholson family are teachers. It must have been in their blood.

In our own district there was a Mr. John A. Hamer. Ben Hicks lived on his place, the Ralph Homes homestead. Ben came about 1906, and Jake Baumbach a little later, and a brother-in-law, Jake Hines. He did not stay long on the farm but the Baumbachs farmed in a big way. Ludwig Larson bought the Al Shannon farm. Olaf Larson was in the Fox Farm business at Blackfalds for some time. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Rae lived on the Larson farm until they retired and moved to Bentley a short time ago. The Hutton family moved onto the old Orlo Urlich place perhaps in 1907, and brought in horses and mules. Bertha, now Mrs. Ray Miles, taught school for several years. Ray Hutton lives about two miles east of Bentley. Blaine married a familiar neighbour, Miss Curtis, a nurse, and they

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BENTLEY BALL PLAYERS — 1919



Back Row, (left to right) Jabez McPherson, Caleb Morrison, Les Pangford, John Whitesell, Buck Fortnerr, D. Wiese, James Miller, (Second Row) Gus Haarstad, Ervie Palmer, Mutt Palmer, Tom Whitworth, Glenn Williams, (Front) Russel Garries.

now live in B. C.

I probably have missed a great deal of this, what I will call the second rush of old-timers and have hardly done them justice. Then there are all the children of these old pioneers married and carrying on where the first settlers left off, in fact, a large part of the population are families of the pioneers of 1897 to the present time, and could be called pioneers, for they have spent their whole lives among us and I believe I am safe to say one of the finest districts in the west, and some of the finest of neighbours and friends that one could care to live among.

Now I wish to pay tribute to the greatest pioneers of all—the wives and mothers, the sisters

and daughters of those early pioneers. They were busy but lonely days for the womenfolk. There were about as many bachelors as men with families. That often made it a mile, or sometimes two or three miles to another family, and, of course, there were no roads or cars. Very few families possessed a buggy or a democrat. There was an odd buckboard, but generally, if the womenfolk got to go, it was by horseback or by lumber wagon, with plenty of mud-holes. Talk about detours! It was about all detour, and no bridges. The first few years men often went on horseback or afoot to Bentley or to the road and School meetings, for they had to have roads, bridges and school-houses. They were merry times,

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RED DEER

ALBERTA

too, and some quick tempers showed some times. Several came near losing their lives crossing the Blindman River. Otto Unlig drowned a team and came near being drowned but for Will Garries hearing him calling for help, he would have. Will came to the rescue just in time to save Otto from a watery grave. A Methodist Minister drowned a team near Mr. Ames place. I understand that Mr. Ames succeeded in roping the buggy and saving the reverend gentleman. Charley Urich drowned a team and went floating downstream in his wagon box. I believe that there were at least two others that drowned teams or had mishaps. Mr. Triplett lost a team in Gull Lake. There have been several bridges washed out while the Blindman seems slow and lazy. I am sure that many of the old-timers will remember it when it seemed one big straight river, and very dangerous. A trip to Lacombe was a two day trip, or more if one had a load.

Robert Stephenson burned lime, and so did George Garries, and perhaps there were others in those days, anything to bring in a little money, after all, I think it was a part of the pioneer life that we enjoyed in a way.

Another family of old-timers, well known around Bentley was the Sie Shoupe family. The old folks did not stay at Bentley very long. They may have come about 1906. They took a homestead near Wittenburg but Dad Shoupe was well known all over the country. He had been a butcher in Okla-

homa, and bought hides from all over the country. They were real pioneers and made a lot of friends. They sold their Leedale place, and farmed on the east side of Gull Lake, then sold out and moved back to the United States. After Mr. Shoupe died, Mrs. Shoupe and Chester moved back to Lacombe. Chester was a genius, made himself a radio set when he was about 12 years old, and was quite a musician. He could fix up a car and make it go with parts from perhaps a dozen other old cars. He parachuted from a plane at Lacombe and Ponoka Fairs, and has been an aircraft designer for many years.

Richard Shoupe and his wife, and his brother Bill ran the Taylor Hotel in Bentley for a while, then Richard homesteaded between Gilby and Wittenburg. He was a Free Methodist ordained Minister, and soon was back preaching again. He was a district Elder in Alberta for many years, went back to the United States, and held some quite important positions in the Church. He lost his first wife, married again, but he passed away a few years ago.

Bill lived north of Bentley for some time. Everyone knew Bill, who was quite a hunter. He and his father hauled out dozens of double sleigh boxes of whitefish from Buck Lake about 45 years ago. They often stayed over night at our place.

Bill Shoupe farms out south east of Lacombe and is quite a successful farmer. His son, Lowell, went to war, married and lives

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PHONE 2138

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RED DEER

near his father's place. Bill is getting quite old.

Phena, Mrs. Bert Challand is well known in the Bentley district. They lived three and a half miles north of town. They were real go-getters. Before he farmed up there he and his brother, Claude Challand, and Bill Shoupe worked on the irrigation ditch near Brooks and did quite well. Mert Challand built two quite large barns, a house, and farmed several hundred acres. Mrs. Challand's health failed and they sold the farm and lived in Lacombe for several years, then moved to Rimbe where they have a nice home. Mert works at carpenter work.

George Hunter, a son of Tom Hunter, lived a half a mile west of Bentley and married Irene Challand. They live on a farm south west of Rimbe and have three fine girls. George and family were with us for about two years as a hired man. ¶

Vera Challand married Sherman Simpson. His folks lived north west of Bentley. For while Sherman lived on the old Snowden place and now lives about four miles north of Lacombe. They seem to be doing well, are good farmers and have two boys and two girls.

Claude Challand married Lillie Shoupe, Mrs. Phena Challand's sister. They live near Leedale. Anna Shoupe married Dave Everts and they lived west of Leedale for awhile then moved to the Pincher Creek country. They are both gone.

Loren Bell worked for Ed Chow-

en several years, also at other places in the district. He was considered a very good hired man — is married and went back east.

Bill Bell was well known in the Bentley and Blackfalds districts. Bill and I were hunting at Wolf Creek one evening and I heard Bill hollering, he was lost as usual. I never saw a man get lost so often but was raring to go the next day. This time he was very excited as he had killed a bear. We spent about two days hunting for it but we could not find the place.

In the early days there was a pair of bald eagles nested for several years on the old Geo. Snowden place. He was very proud of them and warned everyone not to shoot his friends and no one did. Mr. Snowden got quite friendly with them. There was a pair of Eagles nested near Syrran Lake in those days.

Chryst Odberg broke through the ice on Sylvan Lake with a team in 1923, it was 40 degrees below zero, but he was able to save himself and team but got very cold.

A Mr. Popplewell ran a chicken ranch in Bentley in the early days. He told me that one time he got quite a sum of money from the old old country and hired a special car from New York to San Francisco, Cal. He did not seem to have much money when he lived in Bentley, but he sure put on the dog while it lasted.

I sold three horses to a man named Brown near Pendryl, east side of Buck Lake, about 1928.

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The next summer two of them came home and woke us up one morning by their whinnying. The Browns had turned them out to rustle while they went to Banff to work for a couple of months, and in about 5 or 6 weeks later they were home and seemed very pleased.

Part of a very interesting letter that I got from James P. McPherson from Hope, B.C., I will put down as he wrote it to me.

"Summer of 1902 Jabez and I went out with a survey party and helped sub-divide part of Range 3 W 5M from township 39 to 42 — the summer of 1905 the man handling the census work came to me and said townships 35 to 42, R 3 W5M had been left out of the other district and got me to take that to do. To start with I went down around Snake Lake, now called Sylvan Lake, south to all trails west of Eckville, Red Deer and Innisfail (horseback). Most towns had some new settlers but no roads running north and south through any of them. I remember a James Post office, some English out there, I got one for a guide for a few days but now I cannot remember his name. I think down in township 35 I got onto the Innisfail-Rocky Mountain House trail. There was only the Fletchers in that part at that time. I stayed over there one night nearly stayed out one night in the woods near Sylvan Lake when I ran into a Finnish settlement. Just at dark and all had gone to bed I finally talked the man into letting me stay, but had to wait

outside until he got some of the children down the outside stairs so he could take me up to the warm bet they had left.

"In 1902 I think I went to Innisfail west to Markerville (had a Danish name) to get an old cheese making outfit; got it installed in the small two storey building — first floor being dug of the bank being used as a curing room for the cheese, while the floor above was the factory."

Thank you Jamie for this nice little history of the early days. This cheese factory was on Jamie McPherson's homestead where the Picos live now.

Mr. Kneiper lived on the north shore of Sylvan Lake. He was the envy of the district when he grew the first corn ever grown in those parts.

J. C. Carritt was census taker in 1911. The first Rainy Creek School Board was N. E. Nelson, Thos. Bigam and J. C. Carritt. The only ones still living who helped to build the Rainy Creek school are John Steel, John Nelson, C. F. and F. P. Carritt, and F. A. Carritt, now in Iowa.

Al Hammond is quite well known around Bentley some 35 years ago. He married Jessie McMann, who lived south and east of the Carritt Creek school.

The story goes that a charming young lady was on her hands and knees working in the garden at Sylvan Lake a few years ago. About dusk, some passers-by saw what they thought was a bear. In a few moments, there were several cart loads of brave

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bear hunters' on the scene. When the lady in question saw all the cars stopping, she arose to her feet and went into the house. were the bear hunters' faces red! This lady will wonder where I got this.

The Gideons were known as very fast car drivers. The story goes that Big Charley was riding with Chester one time. While holding on very tight he said, "Aint you flying kind of low? I can feel the car touch the ground once in a while." One time the threshers at our place were taking their noonday smoke when someone says, "Here comes Ray Gideon from the north." Another man said, "It is too fast for Ray must be Hoot," but we were all wrong, it was an aeroplane, that was probably not going over 150 miles per hour.

Sanford Allison, a son-in-law of Dad Raymond, was an Indian scout for Uncle Sam during Sitting Bull's rampage. He saw some exciting times.

I believe that Bert Williams owned the first car in Bentley, and J. B. McPherson had the first new Ford, then John Damron, Jamie McPherson, and then there were lots of cars. John Damron gave Philo Slaughter and I our first car ride. What a thrill! John got as much kick out of it as we did, but it wouldn't stop when he hollered whoa!

John Boode killed over a hundred bears it was said, but Ole tells of the first one. John and his kid brother, Ole, had been fishing in the river, and Ole

had gotten his clothes pretty wet. Coming home they met up with a bear. John only had one shell, with it wounded the bear, but it still kept on travelling. While John kept heading it off, Ole started home for shells. As his wet pants slowed him up, he kicked them off, and came home on high in his shirt tail, but in due time he arrived back with the shells, and John finished the bear. They had bear steaks and fish fried in bear grease for supper. The Bopdes got about 25 bears around Gull Lake and Snake Lake one year, trapping most of them one winter. John Boode and Ole were trapping around the north east corner of Gull Lake, in a shack that a very notorious outlaw had lived in, a Mr. Fellows was the name. The Mounties got wind that someone was living in the shack. Supposing that it was Fellows, one moon-lit night the Bopdes heard a noise and saw an Indian jump behind a tree. There were four Mounties at the door, saying 'Fellows, let us in,' while the Bopdes thought that the police were just using the name 'fellows.' The Police thought that they had the bad man, Mr. Fellows, cornered. Ole began to laugh at one of the Mounties. On being asked why he was laughing, he told the Police "By the way his hand was shaking, he could not hit the shack, let alone hit a bad man." Then, John told the Indian that he might have gotten shot, prowling around in the night. The Indian replied "Me jump behind big tree," but when

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John showed them his big gun and shells, 45-90, and said he could shoot through that tree, the Indian turned pale.

As for myself, I was born on April 26, 1875, at Norwalk, Wisconsin. I had no mother's care after I was 11 years old. I lived with my father on about 10 acres of farm land. He worked out most of the time, and I, like Topsey, "just grewed up" in Clark County Wisconsin. I went to work in the mill while quite young, and later followed the lumber camps and log driving. I came to Bentley in July, 1901, bought a C.P.R. quarter section, the S.E. ¼ of 9-41-1 W5thM., where I made my home until March 24, 1951. Ralph Homes, my schoolmate in Wisconsin, filed on my homestead for me before I came. It was N. E. 20-40-1 W 5th M. Walt Stephenson owns it now. I worked south and east of Calgary in hay camps about six weeks every fall. Then, I worked in the woods at Golden, B. C. I was pretty good at that kind of work, but was certainly no farmer. Those days, I also dug wells in the district, the old pick and shovel way. The fall of 1903 I worked at the McPherson mill, and the first part of 1904, Johnny Farr and I loaded logs for Philo Slaughter and Art Garries in the Medicine valley. They had a log-hauling contract, and Pete Adams had the cutting and skidding contract.

I took an active part in the activities of that day, and took in about all the dances, sometimes walking ten miles. Later, I got a

pony from Fred Stevens, a dandy called 'Sweepstakes' Everyone got acquainted with the other fellow. I did a lot of calling at square dances in those times. I built a small log house and a log barn, that are still on the farm, and dug a well 56 feet deep. I hired some land broken. George Draper broke twenty acres at \$3.00 per acre. J. B. McPherson broke out some with three horses. We did not have much brush then and the land broke quite easily. I generally took a little time out for hunting, otherwise, I was working in the district in the summer. I broke and drove 8 oxen for George Garries one season. I helped George Graham break four oxen, and I drove six head part of the time for him. I had been among rough lumberjacks and sometimes when the oxen got contrary and the tempers got high, the atmosphere got almost blue, as George Garries would say, anyway, I was known as one of the worst to swear in the district, but there were others as well.

At at Camp Meeting in Bentley on June 30, 1904, under a heavy load of conviction, I repented of my past sins, and was born again. I read St. John, chapter 3 verse 3, and my life was different from that very night. I will give just one instance, about three weeks before this: George Bentley accused me of saying things that I was not guilty of. He was on his side of the fence, and as I was leaving, he said something that angered me. I

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RED DEER

turned my pony around with the intention of jumping in his face, but he ran for his house. A short time later in July, as I was on my way to meeting, George was out there again and accused me of the same thing that I was not guilty of. As I left he sent the same final last word. I kindly told him that he was misinformed or mistaken. A few days later he told Philo Slaughter all about the two instances and finished by saying, 'I guess that Bert has the real thing.'

I'll admit that I have made plenty of mistakes, but I have lived the best I knew how ever since. Most people have shown the best of respect, a few have ridiculed or said harsh things, but they have said and done these to our Saviour.

I broke out a lot of my own land with four oxen, and also ran a Plaine-Binder with three oxen. I ran a mower and Horse Rake, etc. I had four good oxen, and sold them to John Steele not too long ago. John told me that one team was the best team of oxen that he had ever seen. I worked them in harness. I stacked my grain all alone for seven falls and often had over 125 acres in crop, and stooked it myself, or cut grain for the neighbours and they stooked back to pay for the cutting.

On January 26, 1910, I married Miss Lillie Hale, from north east of Tees. My wife's mother died a few months before we were married. We took the three youngest children. Ruth nearly seven

trained to be a nurse, was nursing for nine years, married, and now lives in Edson. They have five children. Ben has been a first-class engineer on the sea for about 25 years and still is. He has been in a great many countries; has been around the Horn, and through the Panama Canal many times. He was nearly five when he came to live with us. He flies out to see us every two or three years, and has phoned us several times from New York. Donald was about two when he came. He is married, and lives in Edmonton. They have three girls. He is a foreman in what was Hoover's Machine Shop. There were seven men there when he started, now there are several hundred working there.

Well, neighbours, I feel that I have forgotten a lot that some of you may criticize, but I have tried to do the best I could, remembering given names is one of the things I am down on. Perhaps I never knew them, only Mr. and Mrs., which was the way that most of the younger folks addressed their elders in those days.

Some jottings by the wayside as they come to my mind. About 1928, what is known as the Wiancko Fur Farm was started by Mr. A. Wiancko and his three sons, Albert, George, and Douglas.

They bought the John Erickson place, the Gheiseger place and part of other farms adjoining the Horseshoe Ponds, and started a quite large fur ranch. They had several hundred acres, it seemed to me, fenced in with a special

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LACOMBE

fur farm wire. They raised hundreds of muskrats, a lot of beaver, several pens of mink and different kinds of foxes, including black silver, red and cross. Douglas was in charge most of the time, although Albert and George all took part at different times. They ran it for several years. There were other Fur Farms. Ray Miles raised foxes, John Erickson had both foxes and mink, but after a few years of what appeared to be quite successful years, they all went out of fur-farming.

There was a taxidermist who lived north of the Chapel school, Harvey Harding, seems like the name. He was very good at his line of work. He mounted an elk and a moose head for me. He mounted many trophies for the big game hunters, not only the Rimbeys and Bentley hunters, but for many miles around. He was very good at mounting birds and small animals as well. Sometimes he had quite a menagerie in his home. He held a sale and left for B.C., I am told.

Tom Lucknell lived south of Gull Lake for a while, then broke up a lot of land, built a barn where Jake Baumbach lives, and then moved out west of the Fred Schrader place and opened up a farm. Tom drove hard bargains, lived and died by himself.

There was a Chryst Jensen, a Dane, who lived north of John Erickson's place. He was a bachelor. In cold weather, some say, he slept on top of his potatoes and kept his horse in the house to keep warm. He was an old-

timer, but I did not know him very well. He has been dead for many years.

Albion Pearson lives east of Alfred Haarstad's place. It seems that he married an Eckland girl. They were in the bee business in quite a large way, and may be yet. He was a big man with a big smile.

Harry Hansen lives on the Fred Nellis place. He married Edna Pico. They built a big barn and a modern house are up-to-date farmers, milk in a big way, keep a fine herd of cattle, and farm about 400 acres. They did raise sheep for several years, raises hogs, and has been a delegate to the C. A. D. P. for some years. They have grown up with the district, and seem a part of it.

Another family, perhaps not old-timers, but who have been in the country is the Frank Hawkins family. I don't remember when they came. They have made great improvements in that part of the country. Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins built a fine modern home a few years ago. They had a nice orchard beginning to bear fruit, and everything quite comfortable. I will not attempt to say how many Hawkings families there are, but there are several, all have nice homes and are a credit to any neighbourhood. Some of the boys were overseas, I can not say how many.

Joe Diggle is almost an old-timer. He keeps a very fine herd of Holstein cows and is a very good dairyman. He seems to have done well in that district with

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LACOMBE

ALBERTA

his cows. He is a delegate to the C. A. D. P. and is interested in the progress of his district.

Shelby Reed and a bunch of old-timers held a rodeo or stam-pede in July of 1908. There was cattle roping, bronco busting, etc. Hank Smith, I believe, was a son-in-law of Reed's, and Jack Brandon did some good roping and hauling in of the steers to the branding fire. Ed. Hankins and Charley Raymond made the music for the Bowery Dance. It was near what was later known as the Cole place, later, Skeels lived there. A grand day, a big turn out, and the speaker was Senator Talbot. I may be wrong on some of this.

The Skeels family came in 1910. They lived north of Forshee. The old man was thrown from a plow and died from the effects. There was Eugene, Lester, Harold and Bessie. Bessie is not around here now. Mrs. Skeels lives in Rimbey. She is a little hard of hearing, but is very spry for her age, probably near 90 or over.

The Freemans moved into the district from Iola. The old folks lived in Bentley for some time, and are gone now. Jim farmed around Bentley for several years and married Bessie Ellsworth. He passed away a long time ago. Sandy farms near Forshee, and has a very nice home. He served on the Council in our district for several years and is quite a progressive farmer. Sam lives north of Forshee and is making a fine farm and home. Bill drilled wells for a long time, probably does

yet. One of the girls is Mrs. Edwin Chowen, who lives in Bentley.

The John Anderson family lived west of Forshee for a long time, but have lived in Bentley the past few years. I think that Mrs. Anderson is a daughter of Gale Peterson. He lives in Bentley, and all the old-timers know him. Oliver Hicks' first wife was Ruby Anderson, and of course there were the Anderson twins. I never knew which one I was talking to. Mrs. Elmer Calkins was an Anderson. They were a very nice family.

Arthur Tatlock lives south of Bentley about four miles on the old Martin Ide place. He farmed and raised Hereford cattle. They have nice buildings. Then the boys took over and Art went to carpentering. He helped to finish my barn. He built the Bentley curling rink and helped on the Bentley Cold Storage Plant, etc. The boys have built up a very fine herd of Herefords and have shown many nice bulls at the Lacombe and Calgary Bull Sales.

Ralph Mowbray came to the Rimbey district with his mother, brothers and sisters in the quite early days. He married Clara Cole and settled a mile west of the Outlet school. They lived there a long time, had two boys, Russell and Wilbur. Wilbur was killed in the last war. Ralph lost his first wife, moved to Lacombe, and married again. He worked at the Experimental farm many years, started to work one morning, and hardly got to the road when

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he dropped and was dead in a few minutes.

John Poling and family came to the Bentley district about November 10, 1907. They farmed south of town for some time and then ran the Feed Barn before farming north of Bentley for a while. There was quite a family. John had been married and there were 3 boys. I have forgotten the name of the eldest, but C. O. and R. V. Poling were both killed in the first war. Bessie, Mrs. Ed. Ellsworth, lives near Forshee. Mrs. Poling had been married before. Her two sons, Claude Wright, well known around Bentley died just recently, and Ray Wright lived near the Boyle school many years ago. He has been dead a long time. Elton Poling, a son of the late Mr. and Mrs. John Poling, and his family are very well known in the Bentley district as a Trucker, Grain Buyer, and resident for many years.

There was a Bill Bailey who lived in the Lockhart district. He was a rather rough character, and was scribe for the Lacombe Globe. His pen-name B. B. Lee of Greenfeed Valley. He was quite a news hound, and could smell out plenty of news, but put a coarse meaning to a lot of his sayings. I don't know what became of them. John Martin lives on the Bailey farm and has made a nice place of it. The Thomas Bigam family lived down by Sylvan Lake way. I did not know the old folks were old timers, but I don't know in what year they came, probably about 1902. There

was John, Andrew, George, Murray, and Hazel. Hazel is now Mrs. Walt Stephenson, and Murray Bigam married Laura Stephenson, and one of the other Bigam boys married a Stephenson girl. Andrew Bigam has a son, Gordon, living in Red Deer. I believe that Mrs. Hazel Stephenson and her brother Murray Bigam are the only ones left of the family.

There was our good neighbour, Ted Zeluf, a brother of Mrs. Robert Stephenson, came in the early days and helped to build the Stephenson log house in 1900. He was a real carpenter and was well known in the Bentley district. He married one of the Frank Miles girls. His farm was just west of the Frank Miles place. Edgar runs the old farm and lives with his mother. Ted drilled wells for many many years all over the district. He also was one of the early bee raisers, had a fine family, and who are very highly esteemed by all. Lynn served overseas. One of the girls married Ralph Thorp. I believe that he runs a garage between Breton and Calmar.

I almost forgot our old neighbours Charley and Helen Hankins. He was generally known as Hank. They farmed on the west side of the Blindman for a while, then bought the old Jim Sherrock place. They lived there for many years, then lived on the Fred Read place for a long time. Their eldest son, known as Junior, lived on the home place after he got married. Hank was a Dakota cowboy in his younger days. They

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were successful farmers and hog-raisers. Milo, the youngest boy, farmed for several years. Their daughter, Willo, married Percy Gilbert. None of the family are living in the district now.

The Wheeler family lived on their homestead many years, north east of the Chapel School. Erastus Hankins lives there now. Then as the Wheeler family married, the old folks moved near Forshee. Mr. Wheeler died a few years ago. Norman married Florence Woolgar, and they now live in Bentley. He ran a carpenter shop and drives one of the school busses. Helen married Ray Park and lived just across the road from our place. They rented the old Whitworth farm several years then bought it a few years ago. It could perhaps be said that they 'started out on the proverbial shoe-string,' and in a few years had their own home, a good line of machinery, a nice herd of cattle, and a nice bunch of hogs. They are hard workers, good managers, and good neighbours. We have lost trace of the rest of the Wheeler family.

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Scoular, while not old-timers in the Bentley district, have lived here a long time. Jim served in World War 1. They built themselves a comfortable home and farmed a half section. They raised lots of hogs and turkeys, etc., and took an active part in building a better community. Mrs. Scoular wrote many good and interesting articles for the local paper and clubs. They live in Red Deer now. Their

son, Ob, lives on the home place. He is a prosperous farmer. Their daughter Gertie, Mrs. Cecil Suggett, lives north and west of Bentley. All are well known and are highly respected.

There was a family, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Schooly. They lived where Percy Wilton now lives. He ran a paper in Lacombe for several years. They had a nice bunch of Red Polled cattle, but they were more adapted to newspaper work than farming, and soon left the farm. In a few years, they moved from Lacombe and ran a paper somewhere further south. Mrs. Schooly is dead, and I have lost all trace of the family. There were three or four children.

Frank Neumeyer lives west and north of Bentley. He came here from Germany a long time ago. He worked for the Slaughterers for many years, married a Miss Liskie. They are real farmers, the best of neighbours, and have a nice home on the west side of old Baldy Hill. They always have a smile and a cheery hello for everyone.

The George Van Heron family live on what was the Albert Wiancko fur farm. While not a real old-timer, he has been in the district for a long time. George and his brother Ed. served in the Canadian Army, but in a Holland division. I believe that it was in world war 2. They were both overseas. Ed. was stationed within a few miles of his old home for some time, but it was under German control. He was unable

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to see his folks until peace was declared. Quite an experience, so close, yet so far, but Fritz said 'nix' and so it had to be. War has its humorous side as well as its tragic part.

Ed Olson of the Rainy Creek district west of Bentley has lived there the biggest part of his life. He farms on a large scale and raises a lot of hogs. He is also quite a cattle feeder. Ed owns several pieces of land. They built a big barn and hog house a few years ago on what is known as the McKinnon farm and recently built a nice home on the home place. Ed had the misfortune to smash a leg over a year ago — was in the hospital a long time but has been getting around again, but has been laid up along with it.

Several years ago John Blish and John Damron were driving down Sylvan Lake way. They met one of Blish's old neighbors. He introduced the man to Mr. so-and-so, the Fish Warden, and of course John Damron, the supposed Fish Warden, began asking questions about catching fish. The poor fellow did not know anything about illegal fishing until Damron wanted to know "How about the fish tail sticking out of the hole in the sack?" A very embarrassing question to ask.

The first creamery was built about 1908 by J. F. Miller; later the Millers lived on the east side of town. He did quite a lot of farming after he sold the creamery to Ken Kerr. Jimmy Miller served in World War 1; the other son,

Cambelle I think his name was, was working in a bank the last I heard.

Wm. Weice sold the first car of coal off the tracks in 1917. Frank Hood was the first depot agent in 1917; also started the first picture show; then I believe Jake Heinz ran the show next.

The railroad ran an oil turbine kind of trolley car made in England. It was a Jonah. The next was a gasoline car, it was some better. Then came the peanut steam locomotive. I may have these down wrong but we had them all — the steam engine was best of them all.

Fred Ames was the Civil Engineer and contractor for the peanut railroad. When the surveyors came to the Slaughter farm they ran the survey between the house and the barn, and would have made a stretch of railroad without a curve from the Outlet bridge to about the Jack Rogers place. Mrs. Slaughter got busy cooked up a nice chicken dinner and invited the surveyors all in for dinner. She brought up the subject of the railroad between the buildings. "It would be very inconvenient for them, and could not the surveyors go back a few hundred yards and west of the buildings?" — which they did. The surveyors told John Blish, "one could not refuse a nice old lady like that." When the track laying gang got to the Slaughter place, Mr. and Mrs. Slaughter were out there with a big pot of coffee and a dish pan of doughnuts. In return the trainmen gave her a ride to Bentley, so

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she had the distinction of being the first woman to ride over the Outlet railroad bridge.

The old curling rink was built in 1918 — had two sheets of ice. The new curling rink has six sheets of ice. It and the skating rink was built in 1949 and are both a credit to any town of its size. The community owns 12 acres altogether — have a fine ball diamond and keeps up her part in about all the sports of the day.

Will Garries walked to Bentley to church and had to walk a long way on Clem Miles fence, about a mile across the muskeg.

Carl Hilstad struck ice on what is now west of the railroad with his steam Engine, almost burying itself on July 1st, 1915. Perhaps Carl was lucky that there was ice down that deep or he may never have got his engine out of the mud.

John Solberg came in 1903 — 18 children and 16 are alive now, married Sopha Vigs, They raised John says there was no family allowances in those days. One time they started out to visit John Holmans. They had no wagon box, just a few poles to sit on, no dash board or windshield; the oxen had been out to pasture. One of the oxen coughed and the Solbergs turned around and went home. Your guess is as good as mine.

C. F. Damron and Russell Garries were fishing at Palm Beach. They saw a large gathering, a picnicing, and decided not to interfere with them, but found out later it was just the Solberg family which was quite a crowd with their family and grandchildren and all. John still carries the mail from Bentley to Rimbeys three days a week and from Bentley west on the rural route the other three days. The Solbergs are real old pioneers and John can tell some very interest-

ing tales of the early days.

Another family, though not real old timers are Mr. and Mrs. Ed Chowan — lived south of Bentley many years. They had been in the store business before coming to Bentley; they farmed in quite a large way. Ed fed cattle and hogs in large way, were real go-getters. Ed was president of the stock pool for many many years. They sold the farm but still keep active. He bought and remodelled several houses. They take an active part in making a good town and community. Ed Chowan fed a cattalo with his steers one winter. Their daughters Reah, Mrs. Harold Peterson, lives in the district. I have mentioned in another place their son Edwin, well known around Bentley — built a fine up-to-date house a few years ago and lives in town, runs and manages their farm not very far away. The Chown family are very highly respected.

This story would not be complete without mention of the pioneer railroad men, MacClure the jolly old conductor. Mack was well known along the line, stopped to chat with every passenger when collecting tickets. I am not sure if he was the first conductor but Mack was with us a long time. Then his engineer, Fidler, a jolly fellow, and Bill Stansberry, the brakeman. They made a crew hard to beat. I wanted to catch the train at Slaughters one time. They were gone about a quarter of a mile north west of the Slaughter place, saw me coming and waited for me. I was to get on the train north of Winfield. Mr. and Mrs. Sanford Nelson, the man I bought lumber from, someone saw them running towards the siding as the train was pulling out of Nelspur and the train backed up for them. Some claimed they would stop the train to pick

berries, or shoot prairie chicken; but anyway they gave service, but all of that was done away with when the C.P.R. took over.

Jim Thompson probably was the first or one of the first Pool Elevator men. Jim was secretary of the Livestock Pool for a long time and made many friends all over the country — took an active part in all Pool and Co-Op affairs. I believe he is dead as well as about all the pioneer railroad men I have mentioned.

Frank Hewitt is quite an old timer, carpenter and builder, has had a part in building nearly all the better buildings in Bentley and still keeps at it. He has built several nice houses out in the surrounding country as well.

Louie Szasz farms the old Ed Chowan place, not such an old timer, and has done real well and is known as a pure bred hog raiser and livestock raiser and feeder. He takes an active part in working for the good of the community.

There was a George Talbot, section boss for some time, then was promoted to road master. For several years he and Jerry Pillion were on the section. One very cold winter, it may have been 1928, one day as they were going out with their handcar they saw a coyote froze to the rail by its tongue. Jerry started after it with a spike hammer. Mr. coyote left part of its tongue froze to the rail, and Jerry did not get its pelt. I believe Mr. Talbot lives in Lacombe.

Fred Hunter was Pool Elevator agent many years after Jim Thompson left Bentley. Fred had run a creamery before going into the grain buying business for the Pool. There was four boys, George never came back from World War II. Mrs. Hunter died a few years ago. Fred moved away — is mar-

ried again and there is none of the family around Bentley now.

Art Hokenquist replaced Mr. Hunter as grain buyer for the Pool. He was an ardent curler and took an active part in sports. He died just recently.

Bill Pringle was grain buyer for the Alberta Pacific Grain Co. for many years. He lost his wife — his family is married and Bill has moved from Bentley.

Clarence Hergott came to Bentley as a young man many years ago as depot agent and still is. He married Eda Williams. Their only son, Clifford, was married not long ago. Cliff is studying for a medical doctor degree. Mr. and Mrs. Hergott are quite old timers and always have taken a prominent part in the sports of the town and have done their share in everything and anything for the progress of their town and community. Clifford grew up in Bentley except when away to school and college.

Claude Summers and family have been in Bentley for quite some time as manager of the Atlas Lumber Yard. Claude has been secretary on the town board and other activities. They have taken their part with the growth of the town and are well known throughout the district.

One of the yarns told around Bentley is that Bill O'Neil and others fixed up a large paper tube to look like a huge fire cracker with a fuse in it. Someone lit the fuse and threw it near Olaf Larson's feet. He did the disappearing act immediately out the door, and Charley Whitworth leaped over the counter, but of course it did not explode.

The story is told that Mr. Thompson bought a team of horses from Otto Uhlig that sometimes would balk. On one occasion Mr. Thompson was driving them

in the main part of Sylvan Lake after a rain. They stopped and refused to go. A man came along and suggested filling their mouths with mud, which they promptly did, and said horses immediately began to pull — their mind was so occupied in spitting out mud that they forgot to balk.

Jottings and Sayings, Wise Or Otherwise:

Charley Whitworth — "Some people would buy a court house if they could buy it on time".

C. F. Damron — "mark it cheap, the cheapest thing I've sold today; or if you old ladies will wait until after the sale is over I'll talk you all to death."

Ted George built his homestead shop and left no place to get in, then placed the door where he wanted it and cut the hole to fit the door and windows and chinked it with rags.

A bear killed a calf for Thomas Bigam in 1901.

The story goes that a Mr. Robinson, a presbyterian minister, shot his own cow at night. He thought it was a bear.

Jud Carritt was hauling sand, saw a deer looking over a log, shot at it — loaded his gun and it was still there, so shot again. When he looked he had two but that would not hurt Jud's conscience too much.

A few years ago Roy Gideon lived near Gull Lake. He would run down coyotes with his car on the lake — likely killed 75 or a 100 in 8 or 10 years. About 10 or 12 years ago he saw what he thought was a small bear, but after he had killed it he found out he had shot a Wolverine, a very rare animal in these parts.

Mr. Adams and son Earl got a Wolverine in the early days in a dead fall that had been robbing their camp. These are the only ones I ever heard being killed in

the Bentley District. There were several Lynx killed in the early days.

The story goes that John Boode and Frank Adams shot a bear in a trap, about that time another bear arrived on the scene and John's hand loaded shell jammed and our bear hunters had to run in the lake. They had plenty of excitement for a few minutes but got out of it later.

The Boodes used to show a picture of quite a large bunch of wolves with a couple of brave hunters shooting wolves on every side, which proved to be a lot of dead frozen coyotes. Nevertheless it made a good wild west picture.

The Boode Bros. had a big bear mounted in their hotel and a cub near by in a tree. As one came near to look at the cub there stood the old bear; it looked like it was ready to fight and many a guy got a bad scare. For a time they had a big buck deer mounted life size. Louie was a taxidermist and took pictures in those days.

Philo Slaughter had a Maxwell car that was hard to start in cold weather. He used to say he started it so many times with ether that the doggone old car would start itself if he came near it with the ether bottle.

Geo. Snowden's pet word was "by golly" and O. J. Johnson's was "Yumping Yininy" and "Yudas Priest".

Charley Whitworth told the story of the green Englishman plowing his way out and walking back empty until someone showed him how to backfallow and plow his way back.

Ralph Mowbray thought his beans were growing upside down and started to turn them over until his father-in-law came to see what he was doing; but he developed into a pretty good farmer.

Many a green Englishman turned out to be the very best of western farmers and livestock raisers.

St. John O'Neil tells one on himself. When he started stooking in Manitoba the farmers tried to explain that sometimes the binder missed tying a bundle and showed him how to make a band and tie such bundles, but using a tied bundle for an example. When the farmers came around St. John was tying every bundle. St. John laughs now and says "It was just doing it the way he showed me". I might say I cut grain for them and he stooked back to pay for the cutting and I believe he was the fastest stooker I ever saw, and I've seen a lot of good stookers too.

John Damron was seen curling on his water tank, he must have been bit by Tom Lorimer's curling bug.

Ray Miles shot a brown bear on their farm half a mile west of

Bentley in the summer of 1910 or 1911; took some of the meat to Bert Thorp's Meat Market and had Bert give it away to Ray's friends and neighbors.

Jabez McPherson killed a bear about 1904 at the McPherson mill west of Bentley.

John Erickson and the Pico boys caught a cub bear along the river near the Pico place. John kept it for some time on his fox and mink ranch.

The Stephenson family had a pet deer for awhile several years ago. Visitors come from quite a distance to see it.

The Jack Turnbull family had a pet fawn a few years ago; was a very fine pet and called lots of visitors.

Away back around 1907 Geo. Palmer had a pet deer but like many other it failed to come home — probably was shot by some hunter.

I think I'll try giving the names of our boys that went overseas in World War I — 1914 to 1918.

Burger, Alvy	Jaffray, George	Steel, Harold
Bigam, Murray	Morrison, Ralph	Steel, Paul
Coggins, Thomas	Morrison, Caleb	Sniveley, Thomas
Damant, Percy	Miller, James,	Thompson, G. W. M.
Evernden, Arthur	Meredith, Joseph	Taylor, Geoffrey
Grant, William	McPherson, Lyman	† Vig, John
Garries, Paul	O'Neil, St. John	Veefkind, Harold
Hankins, Erastus	O'Neil, William	Whitesell, John
Hankins, George	† Polling, Cecil	Whitesell, Wilbur
† Hansen, Arthur	† Polling, Ray	Whitworth, Bert
Hopkins, Harold	Poling, Zeo	Welch, Phillip
† Hutchinson, Primo	Rathwell, Clifford	Wyatt, Douglas
Harper, Thomas	Skjonesberg, Gustav	

Of this grand bunch of neighbors five were killed overseas and Murray Bigam and Douglas Wyatt enlisted in World War II — 1939 to 1945.

Following is the list of boys that served in World War II.

Anderson, J. W.	† Hunter, G. F.	Repp, C. P.
Anderson, J. S.	Hunter, N.	Reitama, G. A.
Beddoes, L. H.	Hunter, J. J.	Reid, L. L.
Beddoes, H.	Haarstad, E.	Reid, W. A.
Brown, Ray	Jaffray, A.	Sanbrookke, A. E.
Brownlow, H.A.	Johnstone, F.	Sanbrookke, S. S.
Burns, A.	Kripps, E.	† Solie, A. E.
Butcher, E. J.	Krones, K. J.	† Solie W. A.
Cummings, C. K.	Martin, H.	Sorenson, C.
Christenson, L. W.	Metro, J.	Solberg, L. S.
Christenson, A.	† Miles, V. L.	Solbreg, L.
Dickau, R. O.	Miles E.	Solberg, A. B.
Dickau, D. W.	Moore, R. H.	Soma, G. E.
Evernden, E. E.	Mosley, J.	Simons, O. H.
† Evernden, J. G.	Morrow H.	Spycher, G.
Freeman, H. R.	Morrison, H. G.	Spycher, E.
Freeman, E. S.	McNaught, R. B.	Shilberg, G.
Fulton, D. J.	McNaught, C. W.	Skjonsberg, E. H.
Fulton, R. E.	McKilligan, A. J.	Skjonsberg, H.
† Fernie, J. R. B.	Nelson, R. S.	Skeels, R. E.
Fernie, E.	Nelson, F. W.	Szoke, P.
Garries, J. R.	† Neal, H. A.	Thorp, W. L.
Garries, R. H.	Neal, C. G.	Thorp, R. F.
Ghesegar, E.	Parker, R.	Threnholm, R. B.
Ghesegar, L. E.	Parkinson, G. H.	Turnbull, D.
Graham, C.	Parkinson, F. A.	Van Heeren, G.
† Gibson, W. J. C.	Parkinson, G. A.	Van Heeren, A.
Gibson, W.	Palmer, Lucille	Vig, C. H.
Gibson, S.	† Peterson, R. F.	Vig, H. A.
Hawkings, E. F.	Peterson, F. A.	Whitworth, F. R.
Hawkings, E. J.	Pearson, V.	Weise, L. N.
Hawkings, E.	† Petry, L. L.	Woolgar, C.
Harper, C. S.	Pringle, J.	Wright, C.
Henry, W. A.	Pringle, G. A.	Zeluf, L. E.
Hutton, L. D.	Pico, F.	
Hutton, Norva	Renschler, H.	

Civil War veterans of the United States Rebellion of 1861 to 1865 that lived around Bentley were Major McPherson, C. C. Miles, old man Bullock, old man Suggett, old man Hamilton. There may have been a few others.

When we read this large number of our young men, 147, that served in these two wars it is plain to see that Bentley has done their part for their King and Country. There are several other

veterans living near that served in the wars, but did not enlist from Bentley: Jack Turnbull, Rev. Sayre, Joe Gittin. Ewin Morsch was in the U. S. army.

Of those that served in World War I, and no doubt there are others that have been overlooked, five did not return; and in World War II there were ten that never got back home to their loved ones. Many hearts were made sad and another empty chair in their home.

Dear readers — through the courtesy of C. F. Damron, who sat as trustee and chairman most of the time of the Oxford School District No. 678, I will tell of some of the early happenings of the organizing of said school district.

On March 11th, 1902 a meeting was called to order by Harry Brownlow for the purpose of organizing the Springdale School District. Moved by J. Murry, seconded by A. Shannon that W. B. McPherson act as chairman. Moved by Ralph Homes, seconded by H. Brownlow that O. E. Putman act as secretary. Nomination for trustees: 1. C. F. Garries by O. Urlich seconded by C. Miles; 2nd, A. Shannon by H. Brownlow seconded by O. Urlich; 3rd, D. J. Murray by D. Murray seconded by (name omitted); 4th, W. B. McPherson by Al Shannon seconded by Alex McKilligan; 5th, H. Brownlow by R. Homes seconded by Jas. McPherson. Elected was A. Shannon 11 votes, J. D. Murray 10 votes, W. B. McPherson 7 votes — of the others one received 4 votes and one got 1 vote. Immediately after at 2:25 p.m. they took a vote on the formation of the Springdale School District the 11th day of March, 1902 — 11 voted for and 1 against it. The name of Springdale was changed to Oxford School District No. 687 on April 28, 1902 at a board meeting. On a motion by A. Shannon it was determined without dissention to levy a tax of four cents per acre on the assessable land of the district; also on a motion by W. B. McPherson it was decided to lease the house of Guy R. Homes at \$3.00 per month for school purposes. It was agreed to engage Miss Grace A. Wilson as the first teacher for 6 months.

At a board meeting held February 26, 1903 the board proceeded to levy a tax of five cents per

acre, which is 6995 acres and tax on same \$349.75, and purchased a parcel of land I expect where the familiar brick school now stands, but the school erected then was 22x38 with 12 ft. studs. After consideration the board decided to let the contract for building by tender — the following bids were received: R. L. Homes \$123, Niels Larson \$106, O. E. Putman \$95. The contract went to Mr. Putman so we see there was a keen interest in the building trade in 1903. Mr. O. E. Putman built a porch with steps for \$4.00. Dan Murray sold 500 feet of lumber and seven bushels of lime for \$7. A. Adams built the chimney for \$7, the board bought a stove and book from the H. R. Soulgier Co. for \$15.55. Mrs. Mary Porterfield, the second teacher was hired for 10 months at \$45.00 per month, a boy was hired to build the fires and sweep the school at \$2.00 per month. While I have copied this from the minutes of the Oxford School it is typical of all of the school and district of 1901 and for many years later.

Minutes of January 16, 1905 — bills order paid were: Francis Miles, janitor work \$1.50; Miss W. Hutchinson, janitor work \$1.50; and E. Urlich 50c. It does not state for how long, likely 50c per month and teachers salaries were coming up too. Miss Ethel Moke was hired at \$5.25 for the year. On February 6, 1908 it was decided that the tax be 7c per acre and a 5% discount be allowed for all taxes paid by June 15, 1908. At the annual meeting held January 1919 C. F. Damron was elected trustee and stayed on the Oxford School board No. 678 for over 30 years. There are many many interesting things happened along the history of the Oxford School district.

They built a 2 room brick school, then another frame building, then

used the club room of the United Church, then built an \$80,000 school. This past season has seen an addition added to it, some say costing \$40,000. I may not have these figures just right but am not far off.

If I put down all the happenings recorded in the minutes Mr. Damron loaned me it would be a big book, but I pen these few lines to remind us one and all of the changes in prices, salaries etc of 50 years bring — someone else may take up the task of recording it.

I notice at a school meeting held January 5, 1929 C. F. Damron got 60 votes, of his two opponents one carried 21 and the other 7. That is the last in the minutes that I have. I attended a school meeting in the Guy Homes house in the summer of 1901 — some were in favor of moving the Gull Lake school some place on the Meridian and take in what is the Oxford School District. This was strongly opposed by Wm. Weise and others near by. When Mr. Welch told Mr. Weise he should not have homesteaded off to one side the fire fell and hot words flew, but the chairman W. B. McPherson came to action with this

story of two old Scotchmen having a heated argument. Finally one says it would not do if they all thought alike for if they all thought as he did everyone would of wanted his wife, and the other replied "Yes, and if everyone thought as he did no one would of had her". By the time we had our laugh over the joke the chairman had things under control and the meeting went on. But no results until the meeting held March 11, 1902.

The time has come when I seem to have run out of anything to write about, and if you have stayed with me so far your patience must be worn thread bare, so I will bring my little history of the pioneer days to a close. I hope that I have not said anything that has hurt anyone's feelings, and that I have not forgotten too many, and thanks everyone that helped me in so many ways in gathering up the little instances along the way since 1895. I have tried to do my best and sincerely hope you dear neighbors will accept it in the same spirit in which I have written it and forget my poor spelling and worse grammar — remembering I am just another old Bentley pioneer.